WHEN THE LAND WAS YOUNG

LAFAYETTE McLAWS

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WHEN the LAND WAS YOUNG

"He stood there a moment, his chin held high, waiting the onslaught." *See page 186.*

WHEN the LAND WAS YOUNG

BEING *the* TRUE ROMANCE *of* MISTRESS ANTOINETTE HUGUENIN *and* CAPTAIN JACK MIDDLETON *in the* DAYS *of the* BUCCANEERS

By LAFAYETTE McLAWS

ILLUSTRATED BY
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To MY
MOTHER

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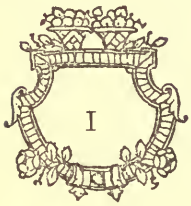


WE were stripped of our clothes and made to stand with our backs to the fire. The Indians, ranged in a semi-circle facing us, sat like bronze statues under the crimson and yellow glare of the leaping flames with the deepening shade of the moss-draped forest behind them.

Three days before we had been surprised in our maize fields; our servants had been slain and we ourselves taken prisoners. Since then we had traveled through the forests so bound and guarded that to attempt escape meant instant death, and so far apart as to render impossible all private speech between us. Our only hope of life lay in a rescue at the hands of our friends and now at the close of a third day that hope was unfulfilled. The sun had gone down and darkness had entered the forest when our

captors came to the banks of the Isundiga and built their camp fire in a little clearing on the top of a bluff overlooking its yellow waters.

Here Colonel Huguenin and I had been freed of our bonds for the first time and sitting among them on the green turf we partook of their evening meal of parched maize and bucan. According to their custom when it was eaten tobacco should have followed; but no warrior took out his pipe or tobacco pouch. The chief of our captors, whom we knew belonged to that warlike nation whose hunting grounds are from the borders of Carolina westward to that wonderful river in which De Soto found his burying place, rose to his feet and began to speak.

He spoke with all the eloquence of a savage leader urging his warriors to vengeance against the white man whose coming among them with protestations of friendship had been only to make captives their brothers, to sell them into slavery, and to rob them of their hunting grounds. Bitter were the thoughts in my heart and curses rose to my lips against Quarry and his slave trade which, I knew, many a time and oft, Huguenin had hotly condemned. A damned trade, he called it, which, so he said, could bring no good fruits to the colonists, even though it lined their purses ten times over with cursed Spanish gold.

The chief ceased. He had spoken to some purpose, for his warriors, maddened by thoughts of revenge, sprang to their feet and began preparations for our death. They hollowed out two shallow, grave-like pits. It was to be a barbecue. I turned to look at Huguenin. We had left our seats on the turf and were standing with our backs against the tall jagged stump of a lightning-blasted pine tree.

"I would my child were back in France," he said. And I knew that this thought had filled his mind ever since our capture.

"She will find friends in Charleston," I said, to comfort him, though my own heart misgave me for the welfare of the girl who had already sailed for the colony. I knew only too well the feeling of bitterness which the Puritans—those stirrers up of strife in whatever land they cast their lot—were instigating in the minds of the other colonists against the Huguenots. "She will find friends and a liberty that could never be hers in France; for I fear me King Louis is but waiting for the more certain seating of the Catholic James in England."

"Were she a boy I would ask nothing better," he answered me. "Men are born to hardship. It is the alloy which gives firmness to their metal. But a woman—" he spoke now so reverently that I knew his thoughts were with

his dead wife—"a woman is so small, so soft, so yielding."

I smiled as across my memory there flashed the picture of his daughter as I had seen her when I first came to the colony ten years before. Little she was, it is true, but not for her seven years of life. Soft and yielding? No. With the hardihood of a young Indian and the determination of all her Huguenot ancestors she had ruled her little kingdom of slaves with the absolute power of a despot. No man could foretell what change had been wrought in her during the ten years spent in France—ten years in which her time had been divided between the teachings of the nuns of her convent school and at the gayest and most corrupt court in Europe —but I knew they could not have made her soft and yielding. If so why came she back to Carolina; why left she the bright, gay life of a court, where the king himself smiled on her, to return of her own free will—yea at her own insistence, for I had seen her letter begging to come—to a land where only hardships awaited her? I smiled at the unlikeness of his description; and then, with sudden shame I remembered the stress in which I stood and sorrowed that I should have so little steadfastness in thoughts not of this world. Seeing that all things were ready for our death Huguenin and

I clasped hands, we looked into each other's eyes for the last time, and then turned to wait the coming of our tormentors.

They rushed at us a dozen strong and laying hold on us, stripped us to the skin. Leading us up the slope with backs to and within a few paces of the fire they left us standing unbound and facing them. We were first to serve as targets for the arrows of the twin sons of the chief—they were still but boys and this was their first march on the war-path. Before life was extinct, for it was possible we would be but slightly wounded, would come the barbecue. My eyes turned down the slope to the pits with their beds of fiery coals and the piles of strong, slender poles on which we were to be bound and stretched. I glanced at the Indians. They had raised their eyes from the ground and were looking steadfastly at us. The two boy warriors were only waiting the signal to let fly their arrows. I understood how, in their heathen pride, they valued indifference to danger and suffering, and I determined that they should see no sign of fear in me, as I knew they would find none in the older soldier who stood at my side gazing so calmly upon them.

My eyes left their impassive faces and traveled over the forest toward Charleston. The sky was bright with stars and some little of the

soft radiance from the silver crescent that I knew still floated above the horizon at my back. The gleam of a magnolia blossom caught my eye as the pale face of a woman smiling through the tree tops. The breeze, increased by the draught of the flames, brought to my nostrils the heavy perfumes of the wild honeysuckle and the locust blossom. The faint coo of the mourning dove came to me from the bottoms, while from the near-by forest sounded the harsh cry of the whippoorwill. The river chafing against the bluff murmured, "Come to me, come to me, come to me." It could only have been a minute that we stood there waiting, but with every heart beat there came to me that whisper of the river. Then came a sharp, singing whistle past my ear, the twang of a bow string and the man at my side quivered. I knew that the most miraculous of all miracles had happened. I had been missed by an arrow from the bow of an Indian.

There followed a silence such as broods before the rush of a whirlwind. "Come to me, come to me," whispered the river. I turned and with a mighty effort sprang through the flames and fell headlong over the top of the bluff into the waters beneath.

The rapid current pushed me down the

"With a mighty effort I sprang through the flames and fell headlong over the bluff."

stream and I rose to the surface a good distance below the spot where I sank, but not beyond the reach of my enemies as I was made to know by the whistle of their arrows only a moment after my head showed above water. I dived and came up on the farther side of a log toward the other shore of the stream. My tormentors had come down from the bluff and were running up and down on the bank watching for me to rise and making trial with their arrows of the quality of every object that floated on the water. Some of the most determined spied my protecting log and put out from the bank, their weapons held high above their heads. I was unarmed and I knew that my only chance for life lay in keeping to the water. I grasped a broken limb of my driftwood fort and pushed the log boldly into the current. There came a shower of arrows from those on the shore, that struck the log or dropped into the stream beyond, while the swimmers in the river shouted and redoubled their efforts to reach me. I strained every effort to increase the speed of my fortress, keeping my head well down and using my free arm and my legs in forcing it through the water. After a time when I dared to raise my head sufficiently to look back, it was to find my pursuers either gone ashore or fallen

far behind in the river. A few more strong strokes and I threw my right arm over the log, and drifted with the current.

Thinking of the brave man left behind and the tortures which I knew would be his I strained my eyes and tried to distinguish movements on the bluff. The fire had faded to a crimson glow and the shouts and calls of the searchers had become as faint as echoes. Far behind, the river appeared a narrowing band of silver ribbon above which the dark boughs of the trees that overhung its tall bluff seemed to meet. On either hand, as I floated, the water spread out over the low grounds or washed against gently sloping embankments. From below, around the curve in the bank, came the hoarse gurgle of shoals. Once, as I was swept along, nearer the bank, a herd of deer that stood belly-deep in the shallows, bounded up the bank with snorts and plunged into the forest. Half turning to look after them my eye caught the glint of some movement on the log behind me. I looked closely. It was a human arm glistening brown and muscular. Farther back towards the end of the log I made out another and I knew that my enemies were again almost upon me.

Half turning my face down stream I watched furtively for what I knew was on the other

side of the log. It came—the head of an Indian, until the eyes glinted above the top of the log, watching me narrowly. Then the glistening arm moved a few inches nearer, and, though I could not see it, I knew that the one at the end of the log would follow. The space of a moment and again the glittering eyes appeared. The arm was slowly withdrawn and when it returned I caught the flash of steel in the starlight and knew that the time to strike had come. With a loudly muttered curse I threw my free arm across the log and stretched my limbs in the water as though seeking relief after a strained position. As lightning strikes I seized the brown arm, and twisted the wrist until I could feel the bones give way; I snatched the knife from the unresisting fingers and rising in the water drove its blade deep into the breast of the brown creature who struggled on the other side of the log.

I had but time to draw it out when his fellow was upon me. Back and forth we struggled, struck and parried, each trying to keep his hold on the floating timber. Twice I felt the keen edge of his knife drink my blood and three times I sank my blade into his body but never to touch a vital part. Once, resting against the log, we glared at each other. Then he loosened his hold and threw himself upon me

with the force and quickness of a catamount. Down, down he pushed me, one hand clutching my throat while with the other he sought to drive his knife into my heart. Now out, now under, we struggled until I felt my strength giving away and my senses leaving me from the pressure on my throat. Making one mighty effort to free myself I rose to the surface and attempted to drive my dagger home, but my enemy was too great for me and I sank again, almost unconscious. Suddenly I felt bottom and knew that we were upon the shoals. Fixing my feet firmly against the rocks, with one final desperate effort I shook the clutch from my throat and grasped my foe by the scalp lock. Down beneath the surface I forced his head and with all my strength held him away from me and against the swiftly moving current. Like some brown monster he battled with the water to get at me but could not. Gradually the movements of his limbs became less violent; he struggled no more, and after a time, my strength being well nigh spent, I loosened my hold and allowed him to be swept past me on to the sharp rocks of the shoal.

It was nigh twelve o'clock when I left the water and staggering up the bank fell exhausted under a clump of willows. I lay as I fell, face downwards upon the grass, for God knows how

long. It seemed but a moment in which I drew my breath, yet when I roused myself and rose to my feet I knew that I must have slept perhaps for hours. It was hard going through the woods with the blackness of night around me. Once, when passing through a forest of moss-draped oaks and hickories that skirted the river I could not see the stars and, losing my way, went back upon my track to come out upon the banks of the Isundiga not far below the shoals. I attempted to cross the cypress pond and I came near going down in a quicksand. Struggling out of that danger I made cautiously for the dry ground only to be warned by an angry rattle that the most venomous of reptiles was on its way to or from its drinking place.

Cold sweat sprang out upon me at this reminder of a loathsome enemy and I fled away from the water into the woods, forgetful alike of my naked body, of my bruised and bleeding feet and of the direction that I was taking. Leaving the belt of pines I came out upon a little open strip and stopped to take my bearing. The air was sweet with the perfumes of wild flowers and the soft grassy turf was grateful to my sore and burning feet. I glanced about me and my heart gave one great throb as before me rose, tall and pallid in the starlight, that shrub most fearsome to all creeping things. Its presence

meant protection against at least one of my many foes of the forest; gratefully I parted its low hanging boughs, with their profusion of white fringe-like blossoms and tender new leaves, and stretched myself on the grass at its roots.

At length daylight came and I could press on. I left my resting place beneath the branches of the grand-daddy-grey-beard and struck out due southeast. The birds had only just begun to stir. As I passed under the pines I saw a couple of old raccoons followed by a half dozen young ones walking towards the swamp. They stopped and stared at me in the half light; then they walked sedately on. A company of musquasses playing hide and seek in the tree-tops, chased each other down and across my path without fear. Even a fox, that most knowing of all the denizens of the forest, paid no heed to me but continued his wallowings in the sand, though I passed so close to him that my foot touched the brush of his tail. So it was that a white man, created in the image of his maker, coming naked into the forest, the birds and the beasts saw me and were not afraid. As the sun climbed above the horizon I turned from my path in search of some stream, great or small, with the hope of satisfying my hunger on wild berries, and of breaking my trail in case I was followed

by Indians. I had not far to seek before I came upon such a stream, a tiny rivulet; there, having quenched my thirst, I began to satisfy the cravings of my stomach with the berries that grew in great abundance on its banks. Then the call of a blue jay attracted my attention and caused me to fume with rage. The trees seemed alive with birds and the air resounded with their songs and calls. They flitted over and around me as though I, with them, was one of the creatures of the forest. The sharp discordant note of the jaybird seemed to challenge me with its persistence and looking up I spied him seated on a branch over my head watching me with suspicious eyes. For a space, as I looked at him, his call stopped, then rising, he flew to the topmost branch of a tall tree where he screamed, "Shame, shame, man, man. Shame, shame, man, man," until the forest resounded with the jarring call of this tribute-taker to the devil; and the birds and animals, thus warned against me, either fled or hid at my coming.

For three days and three nights I fought my way through the forest. Many times my life was in danger from wild beasts and twice I was pursued by Indians. Once the night drawing on shielded me, and once, coming to the Ashepo river, I buried myself in the tall grass. All day I lay in the mud and water under the scorch-

ing of a hot May sun. When darkness fell I crawled out, miles up the stream from where I had entered it, and hastened on toward Charleston. That day dawned and passed away but I stopped not. Snatching handfuls of wild berries I pushed on. Landmarks became more familiar and my bearings easier to hold. Game was less plentiful and more shy. In the afternoon I came upon a herd of swine, rooting and wallowing in a swampy low-ground and knew that my journey was almost at an end.

It was good dusk when I came upon a clearing, and a field of growing maize. I ran across the open space trampling the young grain under my feet. I scaled the palisade, and pounding upon the gate, called aloud to those whom I knew must be within. My call was answered and when I had stated my name and condition the gate was opened and I entered.

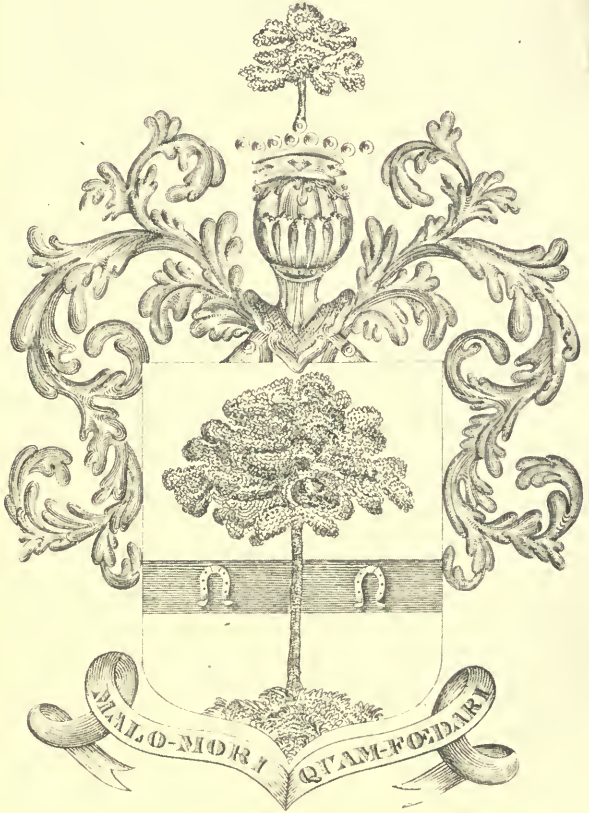
THE man whose demesne I thus entered was Master Bernard Schinking, one of that company of Dutch who, driven from Nova Belgia, sought refuge in Carolina some four years after my arrival from England. I knew him well from the reports of others though I had seen him but seldom and had never before held speech with him. Some two years back his fellows, worn out by the continued hostilities of the Westeos had pulled up stakes, and abandoned the little Carolina city of Jamestown, the foundation of which they had laid south of the Ashley river; then they scattered among the English and French settlers in the counties of Berkeley and Craven, leaving Schinking the only inhabitant of that once prosperous settlement.

"I go not into Charleston, Captain Middleton, except to buy such commodities as cannot be raised on my estates; so it is not strange that I had not heard of the attack against you and Colonel Huguenin," he said presently. He had given me food and clothing and listened to

my adventure as we sat smoking on the steps of his house. "But of one thing I make sure; you have been followed, for Quarry is too true a friend of his people to let such an outrage pass unavenged. Furthermore a raid into the country of a hostile Indian nation, provoked by their own misdeeds, would give him too good an opportunity for the taking of more slaves to be sold into the Barbadoes. It is a traffic of which I approve not, but our Governor is a good man and true and in all else I uphold him though the proprietors like him not. He says, and many of his council with him, that it would be best to capture all these red devils and ship them south to be sold as slaves to the planters of the Indies. Thus only, they think, can the country be made safe for the Colony. I do not agree with them, though I like not the Indians. To my thinking all the braves and squaws peopling this vast continent are not worth that noble gentleman whom you report as being killed at their hands."

"Have you seen a ship go up the river?" I asked, for now Huguenin's last words recurred to me. "When we were captured he was daily expecting his daughter."

"His daughter?" he asked, blowing blue rings into the air. "The little maid of whom he was so fond and yet would send back to



The Arms of the Huguenins.

France that he might not break his word to his dying wife? So! she comes back to this wilderness," he mused. "Leaves the brilliant court of the great Louis, who, I have heard, smiled on her, calling her his beautiful heretic?"

"It was her wish to come," I replied to the questioning in his tone.

"'Tis a strange thing—the fortunes of this Huguenin family," he said, as he refilled his pipe. "By fire and sword have they been tried, and still they always remain true to the creed to which their ancestor gave his name. Colonel Huguenin's grandfather was tossed by his mother from an upper window in the city prison of Orleans, when that building was set on fire by a mob to burn the Huguenot prisoners. Other children, so thrown, were received on the pikes of the soldiers or afterwards murdered. But this Huguenin, the last child of his race, was caught by a servant of the aged Renee of Ferrara, who, being the daughter of a king, dared to be a Protestant. She protected the child, though she was forced to have him raised in the faith of a Catholic. True to his blood, he grew up a heretic despite the teachings of the priests. Now his grandchild with a Catholic mother, born among the buccaneers of Hispaniola—"

"Born among the buccaneers of Hispaniola!" I exclaimed.

"Aye," he answered, looking at me in surprise that having lived so long a friend of Huguenin's, I had not heard this. "Did you not know that the ship in which Huguenin and his wife left France was captured by a Spaniard which in turn was taken by a buccaneer ship in command of Henry Morgan? Yes; the same pirate chief whom your good King Charles was so ready to knight for the sacking of Puerto Bello and other Spanish towns of the Indies. Huguenin had stolen his wife from her convent school and together they fled from France hoping to reach a more northern settlement in America. Other prisoners taken on that Spanish galleon were made to walk the plank or were hung at the yard arm, but Huguenin, because of the persecutions that had always followed his family as well as his daring in stealing his wife, was not only spared, but taken to Hispaniola, the buccaneers' stronghold, where Captain Henry Morgan appointed him to a position of importance. Though they received all consideration his wife pined away with longing for more gentle company, until Morgan seeing her unhappiness, after the birth of her child, took them to England whence they sailed to this Colony. Now, this child, after ten years in that

same convent school from which her mother fled, and in the midst of the gayest and most corrupt court of Europe, comes back to her heretic father, of her own free will, though the only home he has to give her is in the wilderness and the only life she has to look forward to is one of great hardship. It is bred in the bone and I warrant could not be washed out this little maid by the teachings of all the nuns in Christendom. You have seen her. What manner of child was she when she left the Colony?"

"The veriest little termagant," I answered. "Her mother died the year that I arrived in the settlement, when young Mistress was but four years old. The whole estate was at her bidding, father, servants, animals, all and everything were made to give way to her whims."

"Yet they tell me that she was, even in those days, a wondrous little beauty."

"So she was," I replied; "for when heard you of a female thing so humored and petted, who had not beauty. Though she was scarce more than a baby when she went away ten years ago, I remember that men turned from all else when Mistress Antoinette Huguenin was by. And the little devil would have it so, for once while I talked with her father when she would have me look at the tricks of the young bear

she was training, she flew at me like a veritable fury, cuffed me soundly and flung out of the room vowing that she would not see me again until she returned from France. And she did not, though I traveled miles and searched for days for flowers to please her. 'Send the lout away,' she would say to her father when he carried her my flowers and would have made my peace. 'He hath the manners of a stable-boy and I will not see him until I return from France' She hath the temper of the veriest shrew."

"Yea," he answered, "and the steadfastness of a Huguenin, which is a virtue rare in woman."

We sat awhile longer making clouds of smoke, until a whippoorwill uttering its call close to the palisade aroused me. "I was dreaming," I exclaimed, starting up, "and forgot that I must pass to-night in Charleston."

"I, too, was dreaming," Master Schinking cried, rising also.

He called to his servants, who had retired to their huts a hundred yards away, and bade them bring to the gate the horse that I was to ride. When we heard the beast's tramping, he followed me down to the gate.

"Take my counsel, Captain Middleton," he said as I swung myself into the saddle, "and

do your utmost to prevail on Governor Quarry to send a searching party to-morrow. There is that within me that tells me that Huguenin is not dead, and it is our duty to rescue him at any cost." He extended his hand as I gathered up my reins and struck spurs to my horse.

"I will be at the Governor's house to-morrow at noon to lead the searchers to the rescue of Colonel Huguenin," I called back over my shoulder.

"I will meet you there," he answered.

It was a good two hours hard riding to the city and when I came to the gate I beat upon it with the handle of my pistol and giving my name called the guard to open to me. With eager hands he drew the bolts and when he saw me alive and well he would have aroused the town so great was his joy, but I bade him hold his tongue, and spurring my horse galloped past him down the street to the Governor's house.

There was no one on the Governor's porch, but the door stood open and there were lights within. When I came into the hall I saw no one and passed on into the great room where I knew the Governor was wont to do his work. He was there and had with him Master Maurice Mathews, commissioner for my lords the proprietors; Master Blake, brother to Gen-

eral Blake, who had but recently joined us with his family and by the marriage of whose daughter, Mistress Elizabeth, to Joseph Moreton the Sober Party hoped to strengthen its influence; and my very good friend and kinsman, Colonel James West. The three sat around the great table in the middle of the room while West who stood, was talking earnestly. I did not catch any of his words, but before I reached the table Mathews saw me and with blanched face cried:

"Great God!"

The Governor looked up; Blake started to his feet; West came to me. He, too, touched my arm and asked:

"Is it indeed you, cousin? You for whose death we were planning revenge?"

"Death and I are old comrades," I answered. "We have marched together, slept together, fought many a fight and run many a race. This time I escaped him through fire and water, but I left behind me in the forest a gentleman more worthy of Carolina's revenge than am I were I twenty times your kinsman, cousin."

Then I told my tidings, describing our capture, our march to the north and our wading of the Cambahee river several miles southward. I told of the march to the Isundiga, the

wounded prisoner and the two fiery pits I had left behind me on Hago Slago bluff. I finished and stood there waiting their decision. I knew that Huguenin belonged to a sect for whom neither Governor Quarry nor Master Mathews had any great love—for they were narrow men, both considering only the end immediately in view. They liked not the Frenchman's popularity with the better minded of the Colony, though it was won by the kindliness of his nature and the justice of his deeds. Of West and Blake I felt secure, though I knew they would not be the first to break silence. The Governor was the first to speak.

"Though it will cost Carolina a pretty penny, gentlemen,"—I knew at the time he purposed to line his purse with yellow gold gained from Indian captives sold to the Barbadoes, and he only regretted it was in behalf of Huguenin the expedition was undertaken—"and call forth the displeasure of our lords the proprietors—in whose good books, you know, I do not stand too high—it must be as Captain Middleton suggests. Else how could we face young Mistress his daughter?" he cried, laughing.

"The ship has come?" I asked, startled. Until mention of the girl, I had forgotten that she was expected.

"Two days since," West answered, for it was to him that I had turned my eyes. "Before my return with the first party of searchers."

"Zounds! man, and such a beauty," cried the Governor with a great laugh banging down his fist on the table. "No man can look at aught else when she is in sight—nor woman either for that matter. Such eyes, such hair, and—such a temper!" he cried, with another loud laugh, and I knew the nuns had taken none of the fire out of Mistress Antoinette. "If you could have heard her berate me because every man of us had not gone in search of you and her father. You, Jack; yes, you. She was as much concerned for your safety as though you had been her lover."

"I played with her in her father's house when she was a little maid, scarce more than a baby, and I fear I often teased her just to see her in her tantrums," I said gravely, though it was like wine to know that she remembered me and could say aught in my favor.

"Would that I could tease her or do aught else to make her speak up for me as she did for you, man," Mathews cried. "She had, like a lesson, all your good deeds and she recited them for our benefit. She all but flung herself into Colonel West's arms because he had been out

with the searchers and said he would go again."

"To me, Jack," said West, when I again appealed to him with my eyes, "she has a sweetness more alluring even than her great beauty. Her voice was not imperious when she spoke to me, but of a pleading sweetness like softest music." I knew that Mistress Antoinette had lost none of her witchery and I listened with eager ears as he went on. "She spoke of her father's faithfulness to his friends, of his respect for her mother's dying wish to have her educated as a Catholic, of his nobleness to her, and she blamed herself for remaining in France, frittering away her time in the vapid pursuits of court, while he endured the loneliness and hardships of the life here in America. She referred to you as her old playfellow and her father's true friend whom he had praised in all his letters. In one breath she is broken-hearted and laments her father as dead, while in the next she will not believe in his death and rails out against us all as cowards and false-hearted friends for not trying to save him from the Indians."

"That is but natural in a woman, especially in so young a maid," said Master Blake whose efforts were always pacific. "Even in the depths of her despair a woman loses not her

faith in the goodness of God—call it hope an you will—but it never leaves her, so long as reason holds. Blessed it is for man that she is so. Mistress Antoinette will give you good welcome, Captain Middleton, though it will seem hard to her that you bring not more hopeful news."

"Does she stop with you, sir?" I asked, glad to think that she had found friends in such a worthy household, though they had recently come from England and knew her father but slightly.

"She did until to-day," he answered, "when she would go to her father's estate down the river. We opposed it for as long as there seemed a hope of changing her, but, when we found that she could not be moved, my daughter, Mistress Elizabeth Moreton, and her husband accompanied her. They spend the night in her father's house with such of his servants as escaped the Indians and a dozen men to guard them."

"She could have had every man in the town to guard her, Jack," cried the Governor. "Why, man! but they all were dying to go. Some of them begged, went down on their knees, but my lady would have none of them. 'I thank you kindly, gentlemen,' said she. 'I

will be among my father's people, his kind and faithful servants, who will defend me with their lives. Should the worst come to the worst I have always by me this.' And she drew a dagger from her bosom. I give you my word, Jack Middleton, even the sight of that little blade made me shiver, for I know right well that a scratch from it means death. It was a most murderous looking little weapon in spite of its dainty size and the jewels that blazed on its hilt. And I warrant you that her hand will not fail her should the time come to use it."

"God grant it never may!" I cried, starting up and striding towards the door, stung to action by the mere thought of the dangers which surrounded her in this land to which I knew, in her mind, her duty to her father bound her.

"You cannot go now, Jack," West hastened to say. "You must sleep the night with me and at dawn we will ride out to your plantation. From there we can go over to give her the news of the Governor's promise and be back here to meet Master Bernard Schinking at noon."

"So be it," I replied, seeing the wisdom of his advice, yet loath to follow it since it kept

me a few hours longer from the side of Mistress Antoinette Huguenin, whom I had not seen since she was a little maid of seven and whom then I had sworn at as having the temper of a veritable imp.

IT was at the very crack of dawn that West and I mounted our horses and set out for Colonel Huguenin's plantation. The town gate was quickly opened, for we carried the Governor's pass, though there would have been few to question Colonel West or any who rode with him in or out the city at any hour. Once through the gate we clapped spurs to our horses and galloped down the river. For near three hours we rode and it was hard riding, our road as often leading through the mire of the marshes that skirted the river and the coast, as through the forest. The sun gazing like a great eye half above the horizon, fired all it touched, and at last passing through a strip of forest, we came upon the clearing and in sight of my house.

"It is a fine place, but exposed, Jack," said West, as we held our way across the field of young hemp. "The land is strong and the house well built but I would that you had chosen to live nearer Charleston. That Huguenin, who is an old soldier, and accustomed to

hardships and to living away from his kind, should have built here is no small marvel. But that you, Jack, you who love not solitude and could have had your pick of allotments should prefer to live so far in the wilderness is a thing that is beyond my understanding."

"The land is the richest in the Colony, and I, like Huguenin, am fond of the sound and the smell of the sea. Though, perhaps, you will not grant it, cousin, I am but little heedful of imaginary dangers," I replied, more willing to be cheerful, now that we could see that all things about us were at peace.

"And but little cautious against real dangers, as thy recent capture proves, Jack," he answered. "For what other planters so far away from the wall of the town work in their fields day after day without a guard on the watch? None but you, man, and your neighbor and that hardy old Dutch buccaneer at Jamestown. He, it is claimed, has the protection of all the pirates on the coast and the Indians in the forest because he stands between them in the bartering of pearls for rum, though it be unlawful to the Governor and the company. The world credits to you and Huguenin neither of these distinctions, yet neither of you has shown great love of settling too near your fellows. It really seems, Jack,"

he added, jestingly, "that even as a baby you loved the little maid who now comes among us a court beauty."

"And who has but to taste the dullness and hardships of Carolina to return again to that same gayety," I said, made bitter by the Governor's report of the sensation she had created among the men of Charleston and her disdainful treatment of their services. "Weary of court life, she wished new fields of conquests, so she comes back to the colony in the new world. 'Tis the nature of her sex. She is but like other women," I said, though in my heart I knew that I lied and lied foully, for I, above all others who were not of her blood, knew of a surety that she had not come back to the colony for the pleasure of tying captives to the chariot wheels of her beauty.

West no longer heeded me but was gazing steadily towards the sea. Turning my eyes in the same direction for an instant I fancied that I caught sight of a stretched canvas through the mists, far out towards the sunrise. It was only for an instant; then I realized that it must be but the shifting shapes of clouds and mists.

"I thought it was a sail," said West.

"It was but a drift in the mist or a mares-tail showing through the forest. I have seen

them often," I replied, more interested in the sounds that came to me from the fields adjoining the forest where I could see my own and Huguenin's slaves working, guarded by two of their fellows who stood under the trees with guns held ready against the approach of an enemy. I motioned to them.

"Moreton has put them at their tasks," said Colonel West. "He would save your crop against you came back."

"More like it is the doing of Mistress Huguenin," I answered. "She was never one to let the grass grow under her feet in any matter whatsoever."

"Will you not turn aside to your own house?" he asked.

I shook my head. I was too anxious to be in other company; but I only said:

"We have not the time, for I must meet Master Schinking at the Governor's by noon. Besides, I see no smoke and feel sure that my people must have taken refuge at Huguenin's and spent the night there."

"Mistress Antoinette will give you good welcome," he cried.

"We will see," I answered calmly enough, though my heart was pounding so loudly against my side that I feared he would hear it. I spurred my horse, though it was going well

enough, and entering the barricade we approached the house.

Flowers and singing birds seemed everywhere. The house was built of hewn palmetto logs. It could never have been considered a mean one in so new a colony, and now it was a mass of blooming vines. The gardens were bright with brilliant flowers and well-trimmed hedges. Birds flitted about singing as gaily as in the forest and we could hear the drone of the honey bees around the hives against the wall of the barricade. The door stood open and hitching our horses we strode boldly in. Mistress Moreton was in the hall and seeing West gave a little cry of surprise, and came forward to welcome him; but on my coming under her view she started back and sank white and shaking on to the settle.

"Colonel Huguenin?" she gasped as soon as she could speak. "Is he with you?"

West answered her for me, and let her know that I would tell her every detail; so she led us to the piazza on the side of the house facing the water.

"Antoinette is in the garret with old Marcie searching, for I know not what," she said, catching my look of expectancy—and I felt the hot blood flame into my face at being so well understood. "She has taken up the duties

of mistress as though she had only been away a week."

"Your husband, Mistress Moreton, Major Daniels, Will Thorburn and the rest who came to guard you, do they sleep so late or are they in the field with the slaves?" asked West, after I had given my tidings.

"La! no, sir," she exclaimed, laughing. "Had you but come a few minutes earlier you would have seen them sailing back to Charleston. Antoinette would have it that they all go back to their own pursuits. They went unwillingly enough, some even begging to be allowed to remain for the sea air which they said they needed sadly, but she would have none of them. My husband went specially charged to urge the Governor to remember his pledge to send out another party of searchers. She will not believe her father dead, and I fear Captain Middleton's report will make her even more sure and hopeful. Would you speak with her, sir?"

"If you would but let her know that I bear a message from the Governor, lady," West replied, bowing low to her curtsy.

She left us seated on the piazza while she went in search of Mistress Antoinette to receive the Governor's message from him who had held that office more than once. Aye, and

filled it well, though there be those among our lord proprietors who held Governor West in disfavor owing to the weight of the hand which he laid on the Indians as reported to them by that sect of discontents whose mission it has ever been to sow discord in any community wherein they could not rule.

Thinking of these things my mind drifted back to my landing in Carolina; of the strangeness and fascination which the land held for me who was scarce more than a boy and yet well accustomed to the wild roisterings of the men of my day; how in the allotment of land I had been given my pick over men of more worth but holding less influence among the commissioners; how, making poor use of this advantage, according to the thinking of my friends, I had chosen land away from the town, with no other neighbor than a French refugee—a man unpopular with the majority of the settlers, despite his learning and the mild humanity of his views and practices. I thought of the clearing and the tilling of this land, and the building of my house—in all of which this man had ever been both my help and my very wise counsellor; of the few rough pleasures and the many hardships, aye, dangers which we had shared, making me know the true metal of the man and glad that he was my

neighbor. Lastly, I thought of his daughter—aye, and first, too; for, through all my thoughts, like a golden thread, ran the memory of that little maid as I had known her before she left us to go to her mother's people in France. Then came her first childish letters telling of her quiet convent life and of the mysteries of the creed which the sisters strove to teach her. They contained messages to me, first saucy and then more kind. Time passed with her in that quiet convent as well as with us in the New World and she left the teaching of the sisters to go into the gay world of a corrupt court where we knew that a woman's virtue had not the weight of a thistledown—the king believed not in it and so boasted. That her father's hand trembled with a feeling other than pleasure when he broke the seals of her letters I knew full well though neither of us spoke. Watching, I would see the fear on his face pass away as a shadow and his smile break out as the sun. Always he would read me those letters, bright with court gossip and her own merry jests. Seldom and more seldom she made mention of me and in so slight a manner that the words stung with their coldness. All this I called to mind and—

"My thanks are but poor return for so great a favor, gentlemen," were the words which

aroused me and they were spoken by a voice that made my heart thump against my side. I looked at the speaker and drew a great gasping breath. It was the little Antoinette grown to womanhood, but as much more beautiful as the lily than the cowslip, as the rose than the daisy of the fields, aye, verily, as the sun is than the moon. Her clothes—I cannot tell you what she wore, not even the color of her dress. It was Antoinette the girl grown to be a most wondrously beautiful woman that I looked at. Her complexion was of that soft creamy whiteness of a magnolia petal and the color of her cheeks, which I knew to be like that of the pomegranate flower in richness, was become faint as the pink in the wild rose blossom, while the circles under her eyes showed signs of much weeping. Her hair, which was unpowdered, fell below her waist a mass of shining black ringlets. Her eyes were on West as she stood before us curtsying.

"You bear a message from the Governor concerning my father?" she asked, and at the mention of her parent's name her lips, that were of the soft curve of a Cupid's bow, trembled.

An instant we stood silent before her; for, although both of us were rated men of quick wit and had lived much at court, we could not

find words with which to answer her. Her glance passed him and flashed to my face. I saw that she knew me. The color flamed up, dyeing her face the richest crimson; her eyes became as stars in their brightness, and her proud head stiffened on her fair, long throat. She looked a queen indeed, and I felt—her worshipper.

"You left not my father in the forest, Captain Middleton?" she said. "For you were his friend and he rated you true."

Though her words were sure, there was the sharpness of doubt in her tone that cut like a knife.

"Captain Middleton escaped through fire and water, lady," West replied, for I could not command my speech. I saw the color slip from her cheeks and the proud curve of her lips were again shaken. "He came back to us from the very jaws of hell itself, for his captors had everything prepared for his torture."

Then he told her of my adventures, giving them a color which would have been unbecoming had the words fallen from my lips, but which lacked not in truthfulness. He ended with my arrival the night before; he delivered the Governor's message, taking pains to say that I had earnestly urged the expedition and would go as leader and guide; he addressed her

as a lady of the highest rank and, as such, she received his courtesy.

"We need not lose heart," said Mistress Moreton, who had come back on the piazza and sought to offer consolation to Antoinette, though I could plainly see that she understood not the true metal of the girl whose beauty and queenly manners held her in awe. "Your father was only wounded and doubtless the escape of Captain Middleton made the Indians forget their watchfulness, and your father also escaped."

Antoinette shook her head—hers was not the blind hope against hope of a weak woman, but rather the direct reasoning of a strong man, who knows by experience the people with whom he contends.

"You mistake. It did but increase their vigilance, though it may have deferred his torture and death," she said, and neither West nor I could contradict her. "I thank you, Captain Middleton, for your haste in reaching Charleston, when your wounds and fatigue must at least have sorely called for your resting the night at Master Schinking's. And now though you are scarce able to travel you go to lead the Governor's soldiers to my father's rescue?"

"My wounds are but scratches, madam," I

replied, bowing low before her. "And a soldier of the wilderness knows not fatigue when a friend's life stands in danger, and that friend so noble a gentleman as your father."

I saw the tears fill her eyes though she met my gaze boldly and without flinching.

"I could have told your reply before you spoke, Captain Middleton," she graciously made answer. "For I hold in my memory many of your brave deeds before I was sent a wayward child to France. I ill requited your nobleness, for I was ever a willful child and should have been soundly flogged for my impudence."

I made a bungling attempt to reply and was right glad when West seeing my confusion came to my rescue. He slapped me heartily on the knee and exclaimed:

"I warrant you, madam, that he will forgive the little maid any affront she may have put upon him now that he finds her grown to womanhood and himself remembered during all the years she spent at court. Did he not, then is he not worthy of his soldierly title and I will straightway forswear him as my kinsman. But our message delivered, lady, we must not tarry for we meet at the Governor's house at noon when Captain Middleton will receive his com-

mand and proceed in search of your father. We must ride back to Charleston."

"Not until you have breakfasted," she said, signalling to a black slave who stood in the yard. "Mistress Moreton and I were but preparing to take our morning meal when you arrived."

She led the way and we seated ourselves about a table near the end of the piazza.

The house was on a small hillock and from where we sat a wide view of the water could be obtained over the palisade. Before us stretched the broad mouth of the river as it swept down to the sea. The dimpling water reflected the rays of the rising sun like myriads of sparkling gems. On the other shore, a mile away, stretched the forest, the soft green of its foliage touched into gold by the sun rays. On the nearer shore, almost from the water's edge, extended the ploughed fields, the ground dark brown and mellow, above which waved the tender green of the young maize and indigo. There was not a sail in sight. Only flocks of sea fowls in search of food or taking their morning dip were to be seen.

"What ship left the city last night?" asked Mistress Antoinette Huguenin, seeing my eyes turn from the water. "I saw the sail this

morning through a rift in the mist as it put out to sea."

"It must have been the sail that we fancied we saw, Jack," West said to me. Then, turning to Mistress Huguenin, he made reply.

"No ship sailed out last night, madam," he said. "What you saw was but a spray of mist or a mares-tail showing against the sunrise through a rift in the fog near the shore."

"That cannot be, your Honor," Antoinette cried—she had known him as governor of the colony. "I saw the sail distinctly. It was but for an instant and, as you say, through a rift in the fog. Although I watched scanning the horizon when the mist cleared away, it was not to be seen, so I knew that it was putting out to sea and had passed out of sight around the point. But that it was a sail I am sure, for I saw it with my own eyes."

"Our eyes play us strange tricks sometimes, lady," West said courteously. "Although we saw it one moment it disappeared the next and was never seen again though we watched for it most carefully. It was but a mares-tail or a spray of mist. Captain Middleton assures me that he has often been deceived by such illusions. I am sure no ship left the harbor nor was there one expected to enter."

"Be that as it may," Antoinette persisted—

not stubbornly but with a certain gracious decision that seemed only charming in so beautiful a creature. "But I know I saw a canvas putting out to sea and it was the main-top-gallant of a large ship. I have no maggots in my eyes though Mistress Moreton thinks that I have them in my brain because it was my purpose to go with my own slaves in search of my father if the Governor failed me. She caught me searching for weapons with which to arm them when she came to announce your arrival."

"You would have led them yourself?" West cried.

"Aye! why not? Have I not backed the wildest of unbroke colts—a very demon in horse flesh—and conquered him too? Captain Middleton will grant that I knew well how to handle firearms before I left the colony. I have forgotten nothing in the last ten years. As for swords—I have crossed swords more than once with the Grand Monarque himself, and beaten him too, which few of the gentlemen at court can do—not dare not, but cannot do, for King Louis is one of the first swordsmen in Europe and proud of his skill. So well did he like my sword play that he would have my grandaunt order me a suit, such as the young Prince wears, that I might appear more worthy of his steel. My father was my teacher, and to

what better purpose could I put my skill than in rescuing him from the hands of a merciless foe? We are but soldiers of fortune, the women as well as the men of our race, Colonel West, and it behooves us to be well acquainted with weapons of defense."

"You must promise me that you will not make so rash a venture," I begged as we stood up to bid them good-by. "All that can be done to rescue your father I pledge myself to do. You will give it me as a trust?"

Her eyes sank before that which she read in my earnest gaze and her cheeks flamed a rich crimson. Then she looked up and said seriously as she gave me her hand: "It shall be your trust, Captain Middleton. And I know that you will perform it with a faithfulness which would not be in his daughter's power."

There was that within the glance which she gave me that made my blood to bound in my veins and the kiss that I pressed on her hand expressed but a shadow of the love that I felt in my heart.

"I like not that sail skulking around the coast at dawn this morning," I said to West when we were well on our way to Charleston.

"You believe it was truly a sail, then?" West cried, turning in his saddle to look at me.

"Not when my own eyes saw it, for they have deceived me before; but Mistress Huguenin has the eyes of a hawk. She saw and could describe the sail."

He laughed and struck his riding boots with his crop. It was his custom so to urge on his horse, for though he was reputed to be a cruel man, ruling the colony and the Indians by ungentle means, Colonel West could never be persuaded to wear spurs nor would he ever lash the beast that bore him.

"Thou Romeo!" he cried. "Would not believe your own eyes, nor those of your kinsman—who is not an old man though he may so appear to young striplings—but when thy Juliet—even for an instant, for the twinkling of an eye—doth see this same object, lo! there can be no mistake. She hath the eyes of a hawk? Rather say that she hath the eyes of a Dian as she hath the beauty of Athene and the charm of Circe. The maid hath bewitched you. Use your own wit, Jack. No ship left the harbor as you well know. None was expected nor came in. England is at peace with Spain so we have naught to fear from the bigot that governs at Augustine. The buccaneers or pirates—call them what you will—like not the coast of Carolina since Quarry has declared his intention to carry out the commands of the pro-

prietors by treating them as criminals amenable to the laws of England."

"Laugh an you will, cousin," I cried, ill pleased at his jest though I was loath to show it. "It was just the ship she described, for even as a little maid, almost a baby, I never knew her to tell aught that she had not seen, nor see aught that did not prove. An she said she saw it, it was there. I like not its skulking around this coast."

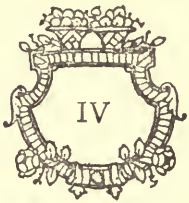
"Zounds! man," he cried. "If its purpose be not honest it does well to keep out the harbor, else would it not only have to face the guns of the fort but those of the two king's ships that came to us ten days ago, and still lie in front of the city. Their guns are no fowling pieces loaded for small game, I can warrant you. No single ship would dare approach the city while they remain so near."

"But it could harry our coast," I insisted. "There are plantations, many of them as well stocked with slaves as with less expensive beasts. If it should be a Spaniard they would consider themselves well paid.

"Art turned woman from very lovesickness, boy?" he exclaimed still laughing. "Take heart, cousin; the maid will be well cared until your return. The men of Charleston will see

to that, I warrant. Oh, you will not lack rivals for the lady's favor."

Though I said nothing more, for I liked not his raillery, I could not throw off thoughts of that skulking sail nor the fear which those thoughts created. A hundred times and more I thought of Antoinette and wished her back in Charleston, safe behind the guns of the fort and the two armed ships that lay at anchor in the harbor. Yet I had no thought that my fears would be proved before the setting of that sun and that I would be miles away and helpless.



ARRIVING at the Governor's house I received his orders and took command of the twenty picked men who were to follow me in pursuit of my recent captors. We spent our first night within the barricades of Master Schinking's estate and the next morning started out while the stars were still high in the heavens. Being well mounted and the country dry, we had brave determination of making the Isundiga before the second night.

I watched the stars fade away, extinguished by that blackness which covers the sky like a pall just before the coming of the day. The sun rose and riding high in the heavens beat down upon us with an intensity that made the shade of the forest grateful to both man and beast. We pushed forward steadily and I knew that we had covered more than half the distance allotted for our day's journey when I told my men that at the next stream we would halt and eat what small provision of food we carried for ourselves and our horses. There was a call from a man in the rear and looking

back I followed the direction of his gestures and saw the dusky form of an Indian break from the forest and come across the open space towards us. His gait was that of a man who has traveled fast for many hours and still pushes on though limbs and brain are reeling. I recognized him as Acuera, the young Coosaw chief who more than once had showed himself true to the white settlers; so I turned my horse and went back to meet him. Coming forward he staggered and leaned against my horse bowing his head upon my knee for a space, for he was well nigh spent.

"Does Acuera bring tidings to his white brother?" I asked, after giving him a short breathing spell.

He drew away from the support of my horse and standing proudly erect like a slender statue in bronze, he answered:

"Since the setting of the moon, Acuera, has traveled to give Captain Middleton warning against the man who, though his face is white, is not his brother and who lives across the sea." He pointed towards Florida. I remembered the ship and my heart stopped within me. "Yesterday, Acuera went with his brothers to the weirs of the Coosaws. When the sun went down he rested with his people and looked out upon the great sea across which the white men

came to the hunting grounds of the Indians. Two long boats came out from the river and their bows sank deep into the water, for they carried many besides those who rowed."

"You followed them, Acuera," I cried, well knowing that the Spaniards came not in open boats. "You saw the great ship?"

"Acuera and his braves are like the fox, and, like him, they know the paths of the forest and the streams. We traveled across the point and in the deep water of the bay saw the great ship into which the boats emptied their loads."

"Acuera is a wise chief and a great warrior," I said. "He knows the paths of the forests and the settlements of the white man. Can he tell me from which of his white brothers the Spanish thieves took the slaves? Did Acuera see his house in ashes?"

"Acuera had no time to look for ashes. There was no need. In the first boat he looked and saw the black people of the great chief whom you seek in the forest and of the young captain who saved Acuera from the stake of the Savannas and avenged the death of his father, the great chief of his nation. Acuera and his people do not forget."

"But in the second boat? What saw you in the second boat, Acuera?" I demanded, and I knew that my voice trembled despite my ef-

forts to conceal the woman in my nature from the men who pressed around us.

"The daughter of the great chief whom Captain Middleton left on the banks of the Isundiga. Acuera saw her in Charleston the day that she came in the great ship from the home of the white man across the water. She is more beautiful than the stars or than any flower that grows in the forest."

"Was she alone, Acuera? Was there no other woman with her?" cried Jonathan Blake, Mistress Moreton's young brother. He was scarce more than a lad and, except for his pleadings and the earnest urgings of his father, the Governor should never have allowed him to come with me. Now his voice trembled and he stood waiting for the answer of the young Indian with blanched face and tearful eyes.

"The sister of the young brave, the squaw of the white chief Moreton, who is the Coosaw's friend, was with her," Acuera answered, and I knew that he felt for the young boy who was near his own age though his voice and manner of speech were as cold and impassive as his face. Then he turned directly to me and said: "The Coosaw warriors have been slain by their enemies and they go no more on the war-path. They need not the son of their

great chief to lead them. He would go with the white Captain on the war-path against the enemies of his nation and to bring back the white maiden, the daughter of the great chief, the friend of the Coosaws."

"I will be glad to have Acuera as a brother among my warriors but first we obey the Governor's orders and go to seek the great chief or to avenge his death in the forest," I replied, though God knows that I was sorely tempted to give up that quest and go to the rescue of the two women who had been snatched as it were from under the very nose of the Governor. I remembered the last words of Mistress Huguenin and knew that I would not have to answer to the Governor alone should I turn aside from my mission.

"Captain Middleton is wise with the wisdom of the white man, but he has not the cunning of the Indian," the young chief replied, with stately dignity. "The Yemassee dogs went not to the north but down the Isundiga to the great sea."

"How did you know that, Acuera?" I demanded. "Four days ago I left them at Hago Slago bluff on the Isundiga river."

"The singing birds of the forest are many and they tell their tales to the Coosaw brave whose father was the great chief of his na-

tion," he made answer after the manner of his people.

"Did the singing birds of the forest tell Acuera of the fate of the white chief whom the Yemassee dogs planned to torture on the bluff?" I asked.

"He marched to the sea with them, more closely bound and guarded; for the Yemassee braves found their two brothers whom Captain Middleton left floating in the water, and they feared to return to help their friends on the Spanish ship attack the city," he replied, with something approaching the shadow of a smile lighting his face for he knew that he was giving great news.

"We should have known it for the work of those devils at Augustine, Captain Middleton," cried Master Bernard Schinking. "When was it that an Indian nation whose hunting grounds lie so far away has attacked Charleston or any other white settlement, unless urged on by Spanish or French villains. And their caravel, you see, dared not approach the city because of the two king's ships that ride at anchor in the harbor. It was a most villainous plan and worthy of them. I warrant you they like not returning with but a handful of slaves, having sacked only two plantations."

"Tell me, Acuera," I asked. "Before coming did you send no word of warning to Charleston of the capture of Colonel Huguenin's daughter and Mistress Moreton?"

He gave assent by a motion of his head. "At sunrise I entered the town and sought out the Governor with the tidings. He summoned the commander and ordered every man to his council. I lingered not when I found that you had gone on the trail of the Yemassee, but before I left, the great ships were being made ready and the people said they would sail before the rising of another moon. I have run fast and long for Captain Middleton makes not short marches. His warriors travel on four feet while I have but two."

"You have served me many times and well, Acuera," I said, when he had given his tidings and stood proudly before me with his arms folded. "But this last service is the best of all and one that I shall never forget. We follow the trail of the Yemassee. If it lead to the land of the Spaniard then will we seek the maiden also—though I warrant that we find her not with her father. Will Acuera go with his brother on the war-path against the Yemassee dogs, the enemies of his nation?"

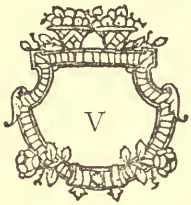
"Captain Middleton is my friend," he said, meeting my request with a fine gesture of as-

sent; "he saved Acuera from the fire death of the Savannas, and the son of the great chief of the Coosaws never forgets. He will go with his white brother on the trail of the Yemassee dogs. The Coosaws are few and at peace with all the tribes of the forest. The singing birds are many and the tales they tell are true. Captain Middleton will find the great white chief in the land of his enemy, the Spaniard, where the great ship carried the maiden and the pale-faced squaw."

If my anxiety to push forward had been great before it became fourfold now. If I could I would have marched all night, until my strength failed me, but Master Bernard Schinking had a cool brain as well as a stout heart.

"Though because of the tales of the singing birds, Captain Middleton, we follow no more so closely the trail," he said at the end of the first day when I was giving commands for our departure hours before the dawn (though we had not halted until the moon was high in the heavens); "there is no need of changing the length nor the time of our marches. It is a great distance to Augustine and while our horses are hardy and well-bred I warrant they will drop beneath us if we hasten on as your heart demands. Use your head, man, and all will yet be well."

His counsel was good and I took it though it went mightily against the grain of my desires. The end was bitter, more bitter than I could have wished for my deadliest enemy—I had not seen him then, though Antoinette's wondrous beauty made me know that he lived; yet, had I it all to go over again, I would still be as impatient for I would think not of the bitter but of the sweet with which it was mingled—a sweetness that was worth all life to taste, a bitterness that was hell.



THE singing birds of the forest were many, indeed, as Acuera said, but they told always the same tale: "The white chief walked in the midst of his captors towards the land of the Spaniard." We followed their trail as fast and as closely as our excursions to the villages of Indians friendly to the English, made necessary by lack of food for ourselves and our horses, would permit.

Acuera was our guide and verily, during that march in which every moment of delay was torture to me, so great was my desire to push on beyond the power of my men and the beasts that bore us, I learned his worth. More than once we would have walked into ambush or fallen easy victims at the hands of hostile Indians had he not received warning and led us aside. He often left us without a word or sign of warning. Even while talking to him I would turn to find him gone, like a shadow hidden out of sight among the trees of the forests. He would reappear as suddenly and from no man knew where. On the march I would find him

walking at my side, in the camp I would awake to find him sleeping among us, and even the man next him unconscious of his presence.

"Captain Middleton will lead his warriors to the great village of the Choctaw mico," he said, appearing at my stirrup one morning after a longer absence than usual. "Yesterday Acuera traveled in the country of the Uchees and at nightfall entered the village of their great war-chief. The Uchee warriors have painted themselves black and sit in close council."

"The village of the Choctaw mico is a day's journey to the northward, Acuera," I said, chafing at the mere thought of delay. "We will continue our march on the trail of the Yemassee and meet the Uchee warriors as Englishmen who fear not their arrows."

"The English are brave warriors and Captain Middleton is the great war-chief of his nation," said the young Indian. "He is wise and will not lead his soldiers into ambush. His braves are but as the fingers and toes of Acuera, while the Uchee warriors are as the leaves of the greatest tree in the forest. It is the sacrifice of their first-born and they would get captives for their dance."

Much as I desired to push forward I could not, for I knew it would be a folly cruel to my

men and bootless to the friends that we sought. I ordered a halt and after short council we turned aside and followed Acuera through the hunting grounds of the Choctaw nation and to the great village of their mico.

We traveled many miles that day over a country of whose beauty I had heard much, but had never seen. The trees of the forest became more lofty and were set so far apart that we found no difficulty in passing through them with our horses. The grass was greener and more luxuriant and everywhere wild fruit grew most luscious and abundant. The deer seemed bigger and in larger herds as we started them from their cool wadings in the clear streams or came upon them, feeding upon the tender grass of some shaded dale. The forest echoed with the songs of birds, and squirrels innumerable ran up and down the trunks of the giant oaks and hickories or, saucily chattering, dropped around us shells of nuts and acorns from their perches among the boughs. The "bob-white" of the male partridge sounded on all sides, while the soft whir-whir of the female warned us of her presence and that of her numerous brood of young that scuttled through the grass and from under our horses' feet to slip among the drifts of dead leaves which the soft browns of their feathered coats so closely resembled. We came

upon flocks of wild turkeys feeding upon the myriads of insects that infested the smaller plants or hopped about in the grass. Although we passed so near that we might easily have cast a stone among them, the cocks did not leave off their struttings nor the hens the search of food for their young;—for the turkey is a wise bird and knows that so long as the brood lacks full feather it remains safe from all snares and death at human hands.

The sun was rapidly nearing the horizon when, leaving the forest, we came into the open country of the Ostenaula valley. The azure river stretched before us, gold flecked and crimsoned by the slanting sun rays. The wide stretch of valley was softly undulating and carpeted with vivid green. A mile to the east and on the banks of the river was that the sight of which caused us to draw in our horses and, with suppressed exclamations, gaze in wonder. It was the great village of the Choctaw mico. Great indeed it appeared to our astonished eyes accustomed as we were to look upon Indian villages in groups of from but ten to fifty smoky huts. This mighty village, or city as it should more properly be called, was divided into two distinct sections. The inner section comprised an area of some hundred or more acres, bounded on the south and west by the river and

on the north and east by a wide ditch or moat which, at its low end, communicated directly with the river. Along the line of this great canal were three small ponds of about two acres each and its upper end expanded into an artificial lake of considerable size, which was separated from the river only by a few paces. Within the enclosure formed by this moat rose five great mounds. On the tops of the four lowest were extensive buildings which I knew to be the lodges of the mico and his principal men, while towering up and dominating them all, on the top of the greatest mound, rising some hundred feet above the valley, shone the temple.

At first my dazzled eyes could see naught else. More than a hundred paces long and half as wide, with a tall pointed roof, it glittered before us like a thing of magic. The play of light and color under the rays of the setting sun was marvelous. It was the space of several minutes before I could withdraw my eyes and listen to the words of Acuera.

"Lumulgee leads his warriors before the mico to give greeting to Captain Middleton," he said, motioning towards the western extremity of the village. Following his hand I perceived a band of painted Indians leaving the district within the moat by way of the narrow

path that separated the lake from the river. They passed through the second district and came out of the stockade by means of what looked to be a small postern gate.

"The great war-chief of the Choctaws is the wise eagle of his nation," continued Acuera. "He comes only to meet those whom the mico will receive as his brother. They would be friends with the English and to-morrow will dance the calumet."

"I tarry not for their entertainment, Acuera," I replied impatiently; for, having come out of the great wonder that the sight of the town had occasioned in me, I remembered with no great pleasure the festivities which this mighty show of numbers and magnificence promised. "To-morrow's dawn must find us on our march towards Augustine."

"The Choctaw mico is the ruler of a mighty people. Lumulgee is his great war-chief and hath all the wisdom of the birds, beasts and serpents of the forests. He loves the English well and will not let them go alone against the Spanish dogs and robbers," the young Indian made reply to my objection. "It is the moon of the green corn and to-morrow the Choctaws celebrate the festival. If Captain Middleton will look in the michemichequipy he will see all the tribes of the great nation," he said, mo-

tioning to the district of the town between the moat and the stockade wall. In this part of the village, reserved for the homes of the common people, there appeared upwards of a thousand wigwams, and I could see that the place was thronged by men and women busily preparing for some great event.

"Zounds! Captain Middleton," cried Master Schinking. "If they celebrate the new corn festival to-morrow we do well to remain. I once passed such a feast among the Savannas and ever since the mere thought of it, has made my mouth to water for the good things we had to eat. Look you! there is plenty and to spare," and he motioned to the well cultivated town plantations which covered the valley as far as the eye could reach—"even for so great a village as the one before us. I have heard much of the friendliness of Lumulgee for the English; I have heard, too, of this great town, the descriptions of which, God forgive me, I laid against the natural gift for lying that even the best of these red heathens have. We stand in need of both rest and food, Captain, and since Lumulgee can give us both, I say, we will do well to tarry."

It needed but a glance into the faces of the men who followed me to make me know their feelings. I had no need to take council. Call-

ing to Acuera, who had gone some fifty paces ahead, I said:

"We will go forward to meet the Choctaw warriors, Acuera, and if they bring friendly messages we will follow them into the great city to receive the greetings of their mico."

"Captain Middleton will not need to enter the great village to greet the mico. He and his picked men will greet their English brothers at the gate. Even now they leave the mound of the miculgeeintoopau," he replied, pointing towards the great mound, second in size, on the top of which I knew was situated the mico's lodge, and from which we could even then see issuing a procession more numerous and gaily dressed than that which, having left the city on our first appearance, was now approaching us at no great distance.

"And those other mounds, Acuera," cried young Jonathan Blake, carried away by the splendid sight that the great village made, surrounded as it was by the blue river and set in the midst of the soft green foliage, under the golden rays of the setting sun, "how call you the great houses that sit on their tops?"

The flicker of a smile passed over the face of the young brave at the boy's eagerness.

"The miculgeeintoopau faces the east that the mico may be the first to greet the great sun

god. On the third mound is the tustunnugul-geeintoopau, the lodge of the great war-chief and his warriors. Its doors are turned north, and they watch for the coming of the cold wind clouds. The istechaguculgeeintoopau is on the fourth mound and looks west that the beloved men may salute the sun as he leaves the hunting grounds of the Choctaws and pray for his safe return. On the lowest mound is the huttemanhuggeeintoopau and its doors turn south that the rays of the sun may shine on the old and the poor of the village when the cold breath of the storm cloud comes down from the north into the land of the Choctaws."

"Tell us about the temple, Acuera," said Master Schinking. "I have heard from Indian traders that it contained bushels of pearls and skins so finely dressed and rare that their like was no longer to be had on this continent. It is, in verity, a most surprising structure, and though I have heard that its brilliance was caused by numberless polished shells woven into the roof, one could almost believe it thatched with plates of gold and silver, studded with rarest gems."

"Does it contain only the bones of the micos, Acuera?" I asked, for it was of such a great size that I could scarcely credit that report.

"The bones of an hundred micos with their

great war-chiefs," he replied. "Twice Acuera came with his father, the mighty chief of the Coosaws, to drink acee, the black-drink, and to sit in close council with the great war-chief." Then throwing up his arms with a gesture of warning which caused me to check my horse, he asked; "Will Captain Middleton make ready to greet Lumulgee? The great war-chief and his warriors are but the distance of an arrow's flight."

Commanding my men to fall back a few paces I dismounted, and with Master Schinking and Jonathan Blake and the young Coosaw chief, I stood waiting to receive as messenger from the Choctaw mico, Lumulgee, the most powerful and, I had heard it said by men well acquainted with savages and their cunning, the most treacherous Indian on the continent.

Our horses still, we heard the soft velvety footfall of many moccasin-shod feet on the turf. A moment we listened; then, from out the shadow of a group of mulberry and plum trees, stepped Lumulgee, the great war-chief of the Choctaws—his warriors following at his back, one by one.

THE Indian who thus faced me was beautiful to look upon. Head and shoulders he towered above his fellows and his figure was of such a perfect symmetry as to pass description. Painted a brilliant red to the waist, with bands of white across his breast and a dash of white on each cheek, he wore neither clothes nor ornaments save his breechclout and two eagle feathers thrust through his scalp-lock. He came to meet us empty handed; even his hunting knife was laid aside. His warriors, likewise, carried no weapons, but around their waists they wore feather fringes, red and white, so long that they met the tops of their gaily beaded moccasins. This reception, I knew was not such as they extended to friendly nations but we were welcomed as dearly loved brothers whose prowess and rank entitled us to be honored and trusted by the whole nation.

The great war-chief of the Choctaws stood before me, the Indian whose prowess on the warpath and wily cunning in the council made

him both feared and respected by the white men of the settlements and his red brothers of the forests. He lacked the high cheek bones that I had learned to look upon as an unfailing characteristic of his race, but instead his face was of that oval contour so often seen in the best type of Europeans. His expression was exceeding pleasant, I might almost say open and bland. But there lay that within his eyes that made me know him as the savage. There was no watchful glitter, no cunning half light. His eyes were as dark and fathomless as a still pool at nightfall. They were a velvety black and of a softness that allured while it baffled. For a moment he and his warriors stood motionless, then, greeting us after the stately manner of his race, Lumulgee came forward and clasped my hand.

He made his speech of welcome, and delivered the mico's message inviting me and my people to the great village of his nation to dwell among them and partake of the feast of the new corn. The words of his speech were both eloquent and dignified, and he delivered it with a stately grace that was most admirable.

Walking at my stirrup, with Acuera on his left, he conducted us toward the village through the numerous plots of the town plantations with their growing crops of maize, to-

bacco and eatable roots. When we came in sight of the gate of the barricade by way of which we had seen them leave the town, it opened and there issued forth a numerous band of gaudily painted Indians, both men and women. Obeying the signal of the Indian who walked at my side I motioned my men to halt just as the company at the gate separated and there appeared, borne by six young warriors, a litter on which sat the mico of the Choctaws. Well through the gate, on the smooth turfen top of a terrace, some four feet in height, the bearers placed the litter and, thus seated the savage ruler remained until I, dismounting with Master Schinking, Jonathan Blake and Acuera, approached within a few paces of him.

When he arose to welcome us his bearers made deep obeisance and fell back among the people who had followed his litter. The mico looked a man in the prime of life, tall and elegantly proportioned. Both in his face and figure he showed strikingly the characteristics of his race. As he delivered his long speech of welcome Lumulgee stood at his side and there appeared not a half dozen years between them, though I knew that men said the great war-chief had already outlived two micos and that this ruler was but a stripling in comparison.

The mico's tattooed breast was crossed by bars of red and white paint. Strings of pearls as large as the end of a man's thumb and glistening white encircled his neck and fell even to his belt. Over his shoulder was flung a mantle of woven nettles, extending to his feet; it had the sheen of finest satin and the color of purest gold. The feathers in his scalp-lock were red and white and his moccasins and the long fringe that fell from his waist were ornamented by tassels made of the long hairs taken from deer's tails and dyed red. He had no weapons, nor did any of those who followed him; but there lay at his feet the peace-pipe, and when I had made reply to his welcome, certain of his warriors stepped forward and laid on the blanket of buffalo wool on which he stood the usual presents of pearls, tobacco, maize and venison.

This ended the ceremony of welcoming us and the mico once more seated himself on his litter, inviting me to take my seat beside him. Thus seated we were borne into the great village and up the terraced way to the top of the great mound of the miculgeeintoopau. I found that lodgment for myself, Master Schinking, and Jonathan Blake had been made ready in the left wing of this wigwam—which when compared to all Indian dwellings that I had pre-

viously seen was great indeed. My men were bestowed in a division of the tustunnugulgeeintoopau and Acuera went with them.

I had gladly spent days and nights, whole weeks in Indian villages during the early days of my arrival in America, but this visit, this coming in the midst of a great people so far removed from our settlement that we knew of them only from the reports of others, was neither to my liking nor my choosing. And yet, that all would go well with us, thrusting ourselves as it were into the very midst of this horde of heathens, I believed. That, after our second night spent amongst them, their ruler, true to the promise given without his gates and repeated as we smoked the peace-pipe before his lodge while we watched his warriors dance the calumet, would speed us on our way to Augustine, our force augmented by two hundred of his warriors, picked men all of them, under the leadership of his great war-chief, I also believed. For I knew that above all things Lumulgee hated and feared the man who ruled at Augustine; hated him, because at his hands he had met his most disastrous defeat; feared him, for the sake of the temple of the Choctaws and the treasure it guarded.

It was to gain possession of this vast treasure

that D'Alva, soon after his arrival as Governor of the Spanish stronghold on the continent of America, had invaded the Choctaw country with a great army at his back. Lumulgee knowing of his object had met him on the borders with a band of warriors, which for numbers and prowess the like had never been seen. Unacquainted with the use of fire arms the Indian chief met his Spanish enemies in open battle and was disastrously defeated. More than half of his warriors were left dead on the field and he himself and fifty more, being wounded, were taken prisoners. Though wounded, this savage leader had accomplished by craftiness that in which he had failed by force of arms. By means known only to himself he gained such control of the Indians employed by the Spaniard to guide him to the great village that they led the army by such routes as to cause them to wander back and forth over a vast country without once gaining sight of the village and its wonderful temple. One by one the Spanish commander punished these false guides by death under the most hideous tortures, but without gaining the desired result. At last, worn out by privations and hardships he returned to Augustine, his army greatly reduced, and without other gains than the fifty Choctaw prisoners. Of these captives

Lumulgee alone managed to escape. The others were sent south and sold as slaves in the Indies.

This happened ten years back but the great war-chief, the wise eagle of the Choctaws, had never attacked Augustine; he had made no effort to avenge the cruelties inflicted upon himself nor the captivity of his braves. Few had been the war-paths on which he had led his warriors. Instead, by honeyed words and cunning councils, he had held the Choctaws at peace with all the tribes of the forests. It was a long peace in which his people prospered and for every warrior lost during that Spanish raid there were now two to take his place. Though the Choctaws marched out on the war-path their prowess in the hunt and the many warlike games which they practiced made them feared, and the man who controlled them received his full share of respect. The public storehouses were many and large; they contained abundant supplies of maize, tobacco, roots, nuts, smoked meats and fish and dried fruits. The plantations and orchards were broad and well cultivated; the weirs were stocked with fish and the city was strongly fortified. All this I could see and with it I realized the steadfast cunning of the Choctaw war-chief. I understood his great love for the English and why his mico, who,

men said, was but an infant in his hands, was prompted to send two hundred of his picked warriors against the Spaniards at Augustine. I understood it all and laughed to myself as I retired to the wigwam assigned me to get what sleep I could in the few hours of the night that remained after our feastings with the mico. The great eagle of the Choctaws, I knew, did not forget, and terrible indeed was the vengeance he planned when he with his white brothers should swoop down upon his unsuspecting enemies. I doubt me if the joy in his savage breast surpassed the fear in mine, when I thought of Antoinette in their power and the dangers to which she was exposed.

My sleep was fitful; not from any fear of treachery, but from very longing to have the next day over and to be again on the march. I arose at last and seeing it was good dawn awoke Master Schinking and Jonathan Blake, who still snored from the effects of the last night's feastings. Going to the door I pulled aside the mat and stepped out. A mighty howl split the air and turning in the direction from whence the sound came I saw the mico before the door of his lodge making his morning salutation to the sun, then but just rising from its banks of purple clouds in the east. Three times he repeated the ear-splitting cry, facing the east

and bending his body prostrate to the earth. This ended, the high priest presented to him a gorgeously ornamented calumet, the first smoke of which he blew towards the god of day; then, turning, he puffed it in succession towards the other three cardinal points.

"The mighty ruler of the Choctaws goes to the great temple to pray for the success of his white brother. Will Captain Middleton go with him?" It was Lumulgee standing at my side, and I had thought myself alone.

I have lived a sober life and keep steady nerves. The face I turned to him was as smiling and unmoved as his own.

"I would see the great temple, Lumulgee," I answered, "though I pray not to your god but to the Great Ruler over all who made the world and the people who inhabit it, both white men and Indians."

"Lumulgee has heard much of the god to whom the white men pray and would learn more from the great captain as they march together to the land of the Spaniard," he replied as we followed the terraced walk stretching upward to the temple and along which mico and priest had passed before us.

Fair and beautiful it shone, touched by the ever brightening sun rays, this tomb of a hundred savage emperors with their chief counsel-

lors. The roof was woven thick with polished shells—conch and periwinkles, great and small—I noted every shell I had ever seen on the seashore and many more besides. From the tall pointed roof to the eaves, from the eaves sweeping the green grass of the turf, extended countless strings of glistening shells. The play of light upon them was as a brilliant rainbow—like the drippings of a summer shower with the sun shining through. Lifting the half dozen mats that hung one after the other across the narrow winding entrance we came at length to the first chamber.

I stopped spellbound. Two lines of gigantic statues in threatening attitudes confronted us. There were twelve, six on each side, and so perfect was their expression and so lifelike their pose that they appeared as though forbidding our entrance to the great inner room which they guarded. Each pair of these monsters was armed with a different kind of weapon and stood in position to use it. The first raised in both hands great wooden clubs, ornamented a quarter of their length with points and facets of polished copper; the second brandished broad swords of wood; the third wielded wooden poles eight feet long and pointed with copper. The next two had tomahawks with blades of sharpened flint; the fifth held bows and arrows,

the strings drawn ready to shoot; while the last pair grasped their hunting knives.

We passed the file of these monsters, then Lumulgee lifted a mat of unusual heaviness, and we entered the great room of the temple. In the subdued light the air seemed filled with floating feathers and pearls, bright colored and glistening white. The high dome was covered by rows and rows of glittering shells, and from them fell long strands of pearls, interspersed by clusters of gorgeous feathers, the whole strung on fine dull-colored thread, so that they appeared to hover unsupported in the air. It was most beautiful. Looking about me I saw that around the walls ran two rows of statues, men and women of life size, and each standing on its own pedestal. The men were painted and fully armed for war, but the women stood empty-handed. They all were ornamented with numerous strings of pearls and bits of copper, and wore mantles of dressed skins or of woven feathers or nettles. In the space between the statues and the walls, on mats of finely woven cane or rare skins and at regular intervals, were placed the burial chests. The larger ones I knew to be those of the micos with their equipments of war, while the smaller, each one placed always at the foot and at right angles with the larger, contained the bones of

his war-chief. Each mico had his war-chief, often two, sometimes three, piled one upon the other. But at the end were two great chests without a lesser, and I knew that between them the bleached bones of the man who stood beside me would be placed some day—yea, some day—but no man could foretell how many days or years would pass. Perhaps another great chest would be added to that vast number before the placing of that lesser. I bethought me of the story which I had got from Acuera, how the war-chiefs of the Choctaws had always been sacrificed at the death of their masters, until the coming of Lumulgee from across the great sea in the south.

"Will Captain Middleton look at the pearls?" Lumulgee asked, and at his question, I left off thinking of the mystery and power of this wonderful people.

He lifted the cover to one of the lower baskets which, placed one on the top of another, formed a great pyramid in the center of the room. It was filled to the top with pearls, unpierced and perfect.

"Are they all filled with pearls, Lumulgee?" I cried, indicating the pyramid.

"All and there are more in there," he answered, pointing to the eight rooms that opened into this greater one. "If the white chief wishes

still more he will find them in the temples of the other villages of the Choctaws."

"I came not into your country for pearls, Lumulgee," I answered, "but for food for my men and beasts and to smoke the peace-pipe."

"There are enough and to spare," he answered. "If you were to load all your beasts and men they would not be missed. What is the Choctaws' is also their brothers."

I shook my head, though I continued to look in wonder at the contents of the baskets which he opened. I saw that all of these pearls were sorted most carefully according to their size. The smallest were seed pearls, while the largest rivalled in size and whiteness those worn by the mico.

"Will Captain Middleton not take some to the pale face maiden whom he seeks in the land of the Spanish robber?" the war-chief asked, extending to me a handful of great size and exceeding whiteness. "To the singing birds of the forest she is fairer than the lily and more beautiful than the dawn."

"She is more beautiful than the singing birds can describe, Lumulgee," I replied, choosing some two dozen of the fairest, for I was touched by the manner and the choosing of the gift. "She will give you her own thanks when you see her in Augustine."

"Lumulgee will see many things in Augustine," was his answer as he led the way into one of the lesser rooms. "Many strange and wonderful things," he repeated.

He pointed out to me many beautiful skins finely dressed, that neither he nor I could guess the manner of beast from which they had been torn nor from whence they came. There were many curious and beautiful weapons, but although I am rated a man of war who loves not peace, I could feel no interest in them. The charm was broken. Once again I began to chafe at the delay and could only think of Antoinette and the dangers that surrounded her. He would have taken me to other rooms and showed me things still more beautiful and rare, but I turned away and bade him lead me from the temple to the lodge of his mico.

I have passed other long days—days in which every minute seemed a hundred years—but I remember not to have lived through one with more impatience than this one in the Choctaw capital. Cursing in my heart I watched the young warriors through their game of chunke, wherein they throw the polished stone, casting their slender poles after it, and then follow so swiftly that man, stone and pole seemed flying together. At another time I would have admired their skill and fleetness, and the smooth

pounded floors of their chunke-yards. But on this day there was but one thought, one desire in my heart. Still I must sit and hold both my countenance and my tongue as became the dignity of my entertainers. I watched the maidens in their gentle glides and furious whirlings of the pinegunbeau while the possau brewed. I drank that possau and was purged of the evil that lay in my stomach if not that which possessed my soul. Then succeeded more feasting and more dancing, followed by the song composed for that especial occasion,—for the Choctaws are a gifted people and proud of their songs, both the music and the words. Then came more feasting, then the war-dance, in which I could have joined right willingly, and I doubt not rivalled the fiercest warrior in his hellish noise and actions. But even the longest days must end, and so at last I found myself in my lodge and tried to sleep through the few remaining hours of my tarrying.

It was early dawn when white men and Indians of the war band drew up on the little plain before the gate of the city to receive the last war-rite of the mico. The whole population was out and brilliant in war-paint. The ruler stood on the little terrace. The war-chief with his warriors at his back faced him. The high priest held a shallow dish of water

into which the savage emperor dipped his hand and flung the drops among his warriors.

"As I scatter this water so scatter you those who come against you," he said; then he took the dish, dashed the contents on a small fire that burned near, and turning back to his braves, said: "As I extinguish this fire so destroy you all of your enemies."

This ended we marched away into a land that at every mile became more strange and beautiful. Two days we traveled and at nightfall on the second day there walked into camp an Indian whose face I had never seen, and I knew that he bore grave tidings though he neither asked for nor sought the war-chief, but sat down by the camp-fire among the Choctaw warriors whom he appeared neither to see nor hear until Lumulgee sent and bade him come to him. Their talk was long and when it was finished the war-chief came to me.

"Captain Middleton will not meet his brothers at Augustine," he told me. "The great ships with all on them sailed to the northward."

"Sailed north, Lumulgee!" I exclaimed, staring at him.

"As they left the harbor there came in another great ship, which turned them back," he explained. "The next day they all put out together, sailing northward. Your brothers

across the sea go on the war-path against another nation, and the great father of the English sends his war-tidings to his warriors in America."

"So James makes war on the Dutch," I reasoned to myself. Then I asked aloud, "The Governor, Lumulgee? Did he send no soldiers to rescue the two women whom the Spaniard stole from under his very walls?"

"They come through the forest," he replied, motioning north-east, "many marches away and few in numbers. The Spanish robber plans to send the maiden and the pale face squaw to the south. His ship waits in the harbor."

Grave indeed were his tidings, and so bitter that I was as one struck dumb. Finally I bethought me of the gaze upon me and said: "Then we have need to hasten."

"I travel far to-night," the war-chief answered, and I noticed that he was fully armed and equipped for the war-path.

"I will go with you, Lumulgee," I cried, starting towards my camp.

He motioned me back.

"Captain Middleton leads his warriors and the braves of my nation. To-night they sleep in the forest, for there will be much hard fighting and they have need to be fresh. To-morrow,"

he continued, "at the setting of the new moon, Lumulgee will open the gate of Augustine for Captain Middleton to enter with his soldiers and the picked men of the Choctaws."

THE heavens were bright with stars when we next set out towards Augustine. As silent as the shades of dead men we moved through the trees or picked our way across the marshes. On other marches there had been laughs and jests and gay songs, but this morning our thoughts were busied with more serious subjects. My men knew of the sailing of the king's ships to the northward, they knew that they would meet no friends before the gates of Augustine, and the bodings of the great enterprise that lay before us quieted those whose wont it was to be most gay. The Indians were well acquainted with the dangerous project which their war-chief, the great man of their people, had gone forward alone to accomplish. They knew as well as I the hatred that burned in his breast and the mighty revenge he purposed. As silent as the stars in the heavens they walked at my side and around me, guiding my course through that pathless forest.

A line of silver light marked the eastern hori-

zon, and an inky blackness spread up over the heavens, extinguishing the stars in whole battalions. The light line broadened and shot out silver points. The points lengthened, the line gained a purple fringe. The blackness over our heads was cut asunder by a silver ray, and the blankets of the night rolled away north and south, leaving a mighty roadway of pure gold. The whole heavens were a blaze of light. In the east lay purple and red and gold cloud banks among which the sun rose blood-red.

"It will be a hot day," said Master Bernard Schinking. They were the first words to break the silence of our march.

"A starless night will follow," added the Choctaw warrior who walked at my stirrup, indicating a faint hazy circle about the sun.

"Then all will go well with our enterprise," I said, speaking with a confidence that I did not feel.

"And I will see my sister again," exclaimed Jonathan Blake. I turned my eyes upon him and nodded assent, although my heart was gripped by a boding fear of evil.

On we marched, making many miles in silence. The sun rose high in the heavens and beat down upon us with an intensity and a brilliance that was blinding whenever our way led not through the forest. The birds, with whose

singing the very air seemed pulsing earlier in the day, became mute and disappeared. The beasts of the forest, great and small, sought their lairs or lay dozing in the mud of the marshes or the cool water of shady streams. In all that long stretch of country, woods, marshes and meadows, we seemed the only things astir. Onward we marched, and the trees and flowers that made beautiful beyond compare that wonderful summer land seemed to cease their whisperings and more faintly give out their perfumes as we passed among them.

It was an hour after noon when we came to the banks of a river and, halting, gazed across at a score or more of not too great wigwams. From the further side a canoe shot out, then another, and another, until down the bank for half a mile every hanging bough was changed into a canoe manned by a supple brown figure. Silently they came across, and, when within our reach, as silently awaited their lading. I asked no questions, but leading my horse stepped into the canoe with the Choctaw brave who had marched at my side throughout the day. He exchanged neither words nor signs with the savage whose dextrously-handled paddles carried us swiftly across the stream. Once landed, as we walked up the bank, there came to meet us a young Indian chief, accom-

panied by a half dozen warriors. Their greetings were friendly, though they brought neither presents nor peace offerings.

"The caciaca of the Cutifachiqui goes to pray in her temple beyond the river," the young chief told me; the Choctaw warrior standing between us acted as interpreter, for the stranger understood not English and I spoke no Spanish. "She has smoked the peace-pipe with the pale face chief that rules at Augustine and her people call the Spaniard brother. Singing birds have told her of Captain Middleton and his warriors who march to the south with the great war-chief of the Choctaws and his braves, though they have not told where he goes nor his mission. She tarries long with her people in the great temple of her nation, but the floors of the wigwams in her village are clean swept and there is food in plenty."

I smiled at the artfully worded message of this woman ruler, who, report had told me, was scarce more than a girl. I returned the young chief's greeting with the best grace I could command and bade him thank his mistress both for myself and the men who followed me. Then I asked of the Choctaw:

"Does he say naught of the maiden and the pale face squaw and the white chief who walked bound in the midst of the Yemassees?"

"They all went within the walls of Augustine," he answered.

"They are there still?" I questioned in alarm.

"Of the white chief he cannot tell, for no man has seen him since he walked through the gates with the Yemassee dogs. The maiden lodges in the great palace of the Governor with the pale face squaw and her black woman. The great ship still lies before the city, making ready to sail."

"Lumulgee," I questioned, "has he no news of him?"

The face of the Choctaw became as expressionless as marble and as immovable. He gazed fixedly across the river as though noting something on the farther bank.

"The Cutifachiqui are at peace with the Spaniards, and see not their enemies," he answered, in a voice that was like his face in expression. "This morning at sunrise the Cutifachiqui brave entered the gate of the city with an old man from the south, a man so old that he drew his mantle about him against the salt breeze. At noon when he left the city the old man sat on the steps of the Governor's palace selling small wares. The brave saw naught of Lumulgee. The war-chief of the Choctaws is the great eagle of his nation. He has the

wisdom of the white man and the Indian. He will meet Captain Middleton in the place and at the hour he appointed."

We found the cool shade of the wigwams most grateful after the heat and glare of the sun, and the food was both plentiful and suited to our palates. My men kept well in the huts, with the mats hanging over the entrance, as did the Choctaw braves except those few who smoked or loitered about the village with the Cutifachiqui chief and his warriors. A stranger passing would have seen naught beyond a deserted Indian village in which a band of young warriors, returning from the hunt, sat idly smoking and waiting the return of their tribe. That the Choctaw sentinels changed from time to time, and that not a stick cracked nor a leaf rustled in the forest that they did not hear and seek out the reason, I knew right well. Though the men around me slept soundly, I could not for a moment lose my thoughts. All through the afternoon and hours far into the night I lay there staring out upon the river through a break in the thatching of the hut.

I watched the blue of the river become more blue. Then it changed to a green, soft and sheeny, with countless sparkling wavelets, red, purple and gold tipped. Then all the colors of the rainbow were there, with many shades be-

sides, and the surface of the water shone as though studded with myriads of sparkling gems. The colors became more subdued and the gold changed to silver. One by one the stars came out until the bosom of the river seemed a milky-way on which the crescent moon appeared,—a silver boat, wave tossed.

It was, perhaps, an hour before midnight that the mat at the entrance of the wigwam was lifted and going out I found the Choctaw warrior awaiting me. The face of the heavens had changed since the rising of the moon. The whole sky was overcast by fleecy clouds through which the stars and the moon, now low in the west, shone dimly. Two hours of silent creeping through the forest, the mud and the water of the marshes, brought us in sight of Augustine, and within two hundred paces of the gate. Black clouds were banking up in the east and the breeze from the sea was both damp and chilling. The moon appeared, a dim crescent in the west, where earth and sky seemed to meet. Then it disappeared; but looking, as I lay among the tall grass on the edge of the marsh, I saw a faint silver light showing above the dark cloud that was slipping down in the west. Still I looked, and I knew that the eyes of every man of my following were upon the same errand, though I could neither see nor

hear them. At last the silver light faded and the cloud sank from view.

"Yap, yap, yap!" came the bark of a fox from that edge of the forest which lay somewhat nearer the walls though an hundred paces farther inland than the marsh in which we crouched. Three times the bark was repeated and so perfect was the sound that my mind misgave me, but the savage at my side stirred; he crawled forward, and I with him. Across that open space, twice an hundred paces, we crept, now crawling, now lying motionless upon the smooth surface of the trodden grass while we waited the passing of a cloud to extinguish the starlight. At length reaching the shadow of the wall we arose to our feet and glided noiselessly towards the gate.

"Yap, yap, yap!" barked the fox in the forest.

I held my breath—I could feel though not hear the panting of the men who crowded each other upon my heels. We listened. Then there came the sound of a dispute, the gate keeper refusing to open to some one who would pass without a warrant. I glanced at the face of the Indian beside me but could tell nothing for the darkness, and I well knew that I could have told no more had it have been high noon. We still listened and the quarrel went on, grow-

ing more hot. Then there fell on my ears the sound of faint footfalls that grew more distinct. It was the watchman on the walls coming towards us. We shrank back into shadow, trying to flatten ourselves against the rough masonry. The dispute within had stopped. The watchman walked on the wall over us. He halted, then went on, and I never knew a man to walk so slowly. It seemed an eternity before the sound of his footfalls ceased to beat upon my ears. Again I strained my ears to catch some sound within the gate. It seemed a city of the dead so still it was. My heart throbs sounded like drum beats; the pulse in my brain beat to bursting; I grew deaf and blind in my very effort to hear a sound that was not.

The dispute within the walls began again and all was so still that I could hear the voice of both speakers. They spoke pure Spanish, both the keeper and the man who would pass the gate. I felt the chill of death in my bones, for I knew that if that gate warden should be too strongly tempted we would not pass within the walls unresisted. I also knew that once the alarm was given there would be soldiers, well trained and twice our numbers, to meet us. D'Alva ruled neither his city nor his foes by gentle means, and report said that he allowed

his soldiers neither rest nor sleep. The voices within had become more friendly, and thinking of Antoinette I grasped my dagger, determined to plunge it in him who left the gate and the keeper who barred our passage. I had not come thus far to——

There was a smothered cry, the sound of a scuffle, a half-muttered oath. I grasped my dagger more firmly and waited, ready to drive it in. I heard the bolts drawn back. Then—the gate opened.

BEFORE us in the gate stood the great war-chief of the Choctaws, splendid in his war trappings, his hunting knife dripping blood. A moment we stared at him, then we rushed in, and when the last man had come within the walls the chief lifted his tomahawk, and there came forth from two hundred throats the blood-curdling war-whoop of the Choctaws.

It was Lumulgee's notice to his enemy of his presence and of the terrible revenge he had come to take for his own and his warrior's wrongs after ten long years of planning.

After that hellish cry there followed a dead silence. Black clouds had spread over the stars and heaven itself seemed affrighted. Then the wails of children, terrified screams, and a torrent of Spanish oaths sounded from within the houses. Lights glimmered and men called to each other across the narrow streets. We waited not, but ran on swiftly up the street, towards the palace of the Governor. Every step

of the way the great war-chief of the Choctaws ran at my side—his hunting knife blood-smeared and still unsheathed.

There were guards around the palace in plenty for peace times but they disappeared at our coming, swept away like thistle-down before the north wind. They had heard the war-whoop as had those in the palace. Lights flashed from room to room, and we found the doors barricaded and men within the windows to guard them. First we attacked the great entrance, but finding that the stout iron-bound doors resisted our onslaught the wily savage chief had a more cunning plan.

"Send thy soldiers with fifty of my warriors to guard the streets against the coming of the robbers from the fort; the boy chief with fifty more braves to the door on the side of the lodge, and leave thy Dutch chief here with fifty," he said, and I, sure of his knowledge of the city and the wisdom of his plans, gave the orders, while he stationed the remaining fifty Choctaws, with bows drawn, in positions to command the windows.

"There is yet another door," he said, coming back to my side. "A little door that leads from the quarters of their women."

I looked into his eyes then, and without a word turned and strode in the direction which

he led. As we passed around the house towards the back, from the very door we sought, two people issued forth—women. In the twinkle of an eye Lumulgee was upon them, his hunting knife buried in the breast of one; his whirling tomahawk cleft the skull of the other. Then he threw his head far back and gave forth that mighty cry of exultation—the most demoniacal which I believe has ever passed human lips—the blood song of his nation. He had drawn the first blood of the battle, and he thus announced it to his warriors. They took up the infernal cry, repeating it until the walls of the city, the air, the very heavens, from the black clouds that lowered above our heads, seemed reverberating with it.

At the hellish sound my heart misgave me, that I should have allied myself with demons bent on such devilish work. I thought of the women and children so rudely awakened and the cruel fate that I had helped to foist upon them. I thought of the many—I thought of Antoinette, and all pity, all misgivings about my enterprise fled. I remembered the two women snatched from under the very walls of Charleston by men, men who had not the courage to sound even a warwhoop. What fate was planned for them, or what had been their treatment in this city where they were held

captives, I did not know, but knowing that Antoinette still lived I felt that they had both so far escaped the worst. Thinking of all this and of the wounded prisoner and the glowing pits that I had left behind so many days ago on the bluff overlooking the Isundiga, a mighty hatred possessed me; a hatred for the man who had caused it all and a thirst for revenge; a mighty desire to throttle him, to get my fingers behind his windpipe that I might jerk it out and so leave him. All feeling for my kind left me and I too became as a devil possessed of all the passions of hell.

Blindly I rushed forward with the savage chief. Behind some blooming vines and shrubbery we found the little door, and, putting our shoulders to it, we burst it from its hinges. We found ourselves at the foot of a narrow flight of stairs, built into the wall; at the top a faint light glimmered. It was evidently a private entrance and these stairs led, perhaps to some lady's bower—I thought of Antoinette and would have rushed up had not Lumulgee placed his hand upon my arm.

"That is but the light that comes from heaven," he said, pointing towards the top of the stairs. "It leads to the roof. Lumulgee will show his white brother; he will lead him to the lair of the robber."

Leaning forward—it was so dark that I could not see what he did—he lifted up the lower end of the steps and disclosed what at first appeared to be a deep and dark hole. Peering in I made out another flight of steps leading down. Obeying his touch I stepped forward and began to descend; he followed me after he had closed the way by which we entered, and in so doing shut out the dusky light that came to us through the open door, and which, when compared to the inky blackness through which we walked, was as the brightness of noonday. Down the stairs we groped to an underground passage—underground I knew both from the chill that clutched me and the dead silence that it contained; not the faintest echo of the turmoil that we had left behind reached us after the closing of that trap-door. That it was of sufficient width for three men to walk abreast, I learned by stretching my arms from one side to the other; I discovered, also, that it was walled with rough masonry. We had walked perhaps an hundred yards in this passage; and I was but a step ahead of the war-chief, when I came bump! against the wall.

"It is the end, Lumulgee," I exclaimed, recoiling from the shock.

"Captain Middleton has but just come to the dividing of the two ways," he answered. "Lu-

mulgee will first show the white chief how the Spanish robber watches the women whom he holds captive in his palace, then take him to the lair of the robber." His hand turned me into the passage on the left.

From the foot of the last stairs the floor of the passage had sloped gently downward. Now we began to ascend more and more abruptly. Neither did we move straight ahead as in the first passage, but bore always to the right. I had begun to think that we were making a circle, when Lumulgee's hand touched me and he indicated a ray of grey light which I had seen only the smallest space of time before I felt the weight of his hand. As faintly as the light shone there came to my ears the shouts and cries of both those who stormed and those who defended the palace.

"That light comes from the room in which sleeps the woman whom the Spanish thief would watch," the Indian at my side said, and his deep contempt for so cowardly a deed made itself felt even in his passionless voice. "The white maiden whom Captain Middleton seeks has slept there many nights with her black woman and the pale face squaw. This night she sleeps so soundly that the noise does not awake her or else they listen in silence. She

burns her light dimly or that ray would shine more red."

He leaned forward and placed his eye to the opening. Then he moved back and something more like a laugh than any sound I had ever before heard from Indian escaped him.

"The white maiden is as wise as the serpent and hath the eyes of a hawk," he said. "She hath seen the eye of the man who spied upon her and covered his peep-hole. Will Captain Middleton look?"

I pressed my eye to the hole—it was of about the bigness of a man's eye—but could see nothing save a grey spot as of light shining through a thick cloth. There were no sounds except those made by the men who warred against each other. Coming as faintly as they did these cries once more awakened my thirst for revenge against the man, the baseness of whose nature I was only just beginning to comprehend.

"We must hasten to the Governor, Lumulgee," I exclaimed, turning back in the direction whence we had come.

Again came that sound of savage mirth, and I knew that the great chief laughed, pleased by the longing for revenge that the eagerness in my voice evidenced. Silently he turned and I

followed him. We retraced our steps past the central passage and began another ascent, bearing always to the left until I realized that the spot we sought could be but a few paces from the end of that passage with the peep-hole. This struck me as a wondrously strange waste of work and I began to puzzle for a reason, which when found, I knew would be dark as hell itself.

"What does this circle that we have well nigh passed around contain, Lumulgee?" I asked.

"A dungeon as damp as it is black," he answered. "In it the Spanish thief puts women when all else has failed and such of his other prisoners as he would have tortured under his own eyes. Lumulgee was there when the Spaniard sought to wring from him the treasure of the great temple of the Choctaws."

"Antoinette!" I cried. "The white maiden whom we seek, she was not in that room with the peep-hole?"

"At the sunset she, with her black woman and the white squaw, walked on the sea wall with the Governor and his nephew to whom he seeks to mate her. She spoke gaily, with jests that made all who were with her laugh. Her eyes were bright as stars and she has roses, not lilies, in her cheeks. The eyes of the young

Spanish chief never leave her; he can see naught else. He is as tall as Captain Middleton and more beautiful than anything in the forest."

This was the first description that I had of him who I knew would prove my bitterest enemy, and my hatred for him was as great as my love for the girl he sought, though the one passion was of less than an hour's growth while the other was the growth of well nigh her whole lifetime. I placed my hand on my sword and drew it from its scabbard. My ears caught the first faint sounds of the contest that raged without, and they grew so great as we hastened on that I knew our men must have gained entrance.

"Captain Middleton will have need for his weapon," the chief said as my sword left its scabbard. "We are upon the door to the great room of the robber and there will be much fighting."

We stopped and Lumulgee leaned forward. Then the wall that faced us opened and we stepped into a passage less damp and dark. Here the sounds from without came so loudly that I could distinguish the voices and the clash of swords. Again we stopped and I knew that the Indian at my side felt for some spring hidden in the wall. A panel slid back and let in a

glare of light that, as it struck us, for a moment blinded me.

The room into which we looked was evidently the last redoubt of the Governor in his palace and he doubtless intended, if driven from it before the arrival of his troops from the fort, to escape into the city by means of the secret passage through which the one man in the world who thirsted most for his blood, had come to seek him out. The Governor and he whom I knew to be my enemy, though it was the first time that I had ever clapped eyes upon him, with two dozen men—guards and servitors in the palace—waited with weapons ready drawn for those who attacked the barricaded door to force their entrance. Their backs were towards us as, for an instant, we stood without the secret door. The movement of the panel had been silent, noiseless, yet as though drawn by a mighty fascination the Spanish ruler turned and looked upon the face of Lumulgee. A moment they glared into each other's eyes, the hunted man paling under the eyes of his enemy; then with a blasphemous oath the Spaniard sprang forward to cut off our entrance—his men moving with him. We were too quick for them. We rushed in and from a touch of Lumulgee's hand the panel slipped back into place.

I am rated a good swordsman and fear not to meet any living man with two good blades between us, but when this crowd rushed upon us, two dozen and two against two, I cannot swear that I felt no coward longing in my heart. If it was there—though I say not it was —I gave it scant hearing, for placing my back against the wall, shoulder to shoulder with Lumulgee, I met them with my flashing sword. One at least—a guard tall and weighty—felt its keenness and sank dying at my feet, forming a barrier from which his fellows shrank back glaring at us. Lumulgee too had slain an enemy who lay, with cleft skull, sprawling before us. A moment they glared at us, crowded against the farther side of the wall. We could hear the shouts of our men running back and forth over the palace as they chased the fleeing inmates or sought the quarry that we had found. Then mine enemy, choosing six men, who knew well how to handle their weapons I warrant, strode forward more coolly to meet us. The Governor forced by his nephew—for I must say the Spaniard acted not the coward but ever seemed as willing to meet Lumulgee as the war-chief was to get at him—stood surrounded by his men and crying out warnings to those who fought.

It was the sword of the young Spanish

Apollo that crossed my own while his fellows pitched upon Lumulgee. I looked into his eyes and met a hatred as great as my own, and I soon knew that I had met as good a swordsman.

Our swords flashed and the movement of both eyes and wrist was as lightning. I touched him more than once and as often felt his cold steel enter my flesh. Lumulgee finished two of his foes and some half dozen of those who held guard about the Governor rushed forward to take their place. As they came upon him the great war-chief lifted his head and again the blood-song of the Choctaws sounded—this time with a trailing end note that I knew called his warriors to him with the swiftness of dogs on the hunt. They came. The barricaded door resounded, then shook with the fury of their attack. My enemy's thrusts became more rapid and harder to parry. The panel against which the Governor stood was opened and, pushed by his men, he turned to flee. Then there went flashing, whirling with a swiftness that made its singing heard above the shouts and noise outside, the war-hatchet of his enemy. With his head cleft to the chin the Governor of Augustine fell across the threshold of the room which he was about to enter. The shrieks of terrified women mingled with the blood-song of the Indian chief and there flashed before my

eyes as they watched the movements, the very thoughts of the man who sought my life, a mingled vision of women's bright skirts and white faces. Then there sounded a cry in which there was neither fear nor anger.

"Jack! Jack! I said it was you, come to save me and my father."

Over the Governor's body, into the room strewn with dead men and slippery with blood, she sped towards me. The Spaniard made desperate, as I saw by the note of gladness in her voice, gave a furious thrust and my blade pierced him through, the point showing at his back. I drew it out. She reached my side as he sank at my feet, the door burst open and Jonathan Blake and those he led rushed in.

There was small time for dalliance. The shouts in the streets warned us of the approach of the soldiers from the fort and I was wounded, my clothes bloodstained from wounds that were more than sword pricks, but there was that within her eyes for the knowledge of which I would gladly have yielded up every drop of blood in my body. A moment I held her in my arms and pressed my lips to hers; then I led her into the room from which she had come and in which Mistress Moreton and the black woman still remained. We found only Jonathan Blake and Acuera with the

women. On the breaking in of the door the Spaniards who still fought Lumulgee had fled into other rooms of the palace and our men after them. I gave one quick startled look towards the room which we had just left, thinking only of the dead men who strewed the floor; then I turned to the Coosaw.

"Lumulgee?" I asked.

"The great war-chief of the Choctaws bore away the body of his enemy and covered his blood that the women of his English brothers need not look upon it," Acuera replied, motioning to the spot where the Governor had fallen and which I now saw was covered by a Spanish cloak.

I asked not where he bore the body nor for what purpose, for my thoughts and eyes were filled with the safety of the girl who stood at my side, her hand clasped in my own.

"You must come with us, Antoinette," I said. "You and Mistress Moreton and Marcie. We have not the strength to beat back the soldiers and the people of the town for long and we must get beyond its wall and into the forest."

"I am ready, Jack," she answered. "I can walk as fast and far as any white man, but Marcie is old and Mistress Moreton——"

She broke off, her face growing pale. "Jack,

Jack, where is my father?" she cried. "Have you taken him out of that dungeon vault into which they thrust him yesterday at noon?"

My heart grew cold within my breast as I met the wild questioning of her eyes. In my eager, determined search for her and the wild joy that followed our meeting I had thought of nothing else, and the thought of the charge that she had placed upon me and the Governor's commands had been entirely forgotten.

"Can the white maiden tell where the Spanish robber hid the white chief, her father?" Lumulgee's voice asked, and, turning, I found him standing before us.

For a moment Antoinette gazed at him and then as though recognizing the greatness of his prowess and his high rank from the dignity of his face and bearing, she swept him a courtesy that was both graceful and respectful.

"Aye," she answered, when he had returned her greeting with a courtly dignity that Louis himself might have envied. "Yesterday noon they took me to see them wall him up in his cell, a cell so small that it was scarce more than a vault. They thought that the sight of him and the suffering that he would endure would force me to wed the nephew of the butcher who, less than an hour ago, was the Governor of Augustine. But I obeyed my father and would not;

so they walled him up and left him there to die of hunger and thirst."

"You spoke with him, Antoinette?" I asked in surprise.

"Yes, Jack, and he bade me, as I held him dear as my father and feared my God, to stand firm; to take my life if need be by any means that lay in my power, rather than become the wife of a Spaniard," she replied, and I thought she clung more closely to me. "Had he not so laid his commands on me, Jack, I doubt if I could have stood my ground. He is in the dungeon of the fort," she said, speaking once more directly to Lumulgee. "I can lead you to the very cell."

"The war-chief of the Choctaws knows well that dungeon," he assured her with grave courtesy. "He, with his braves, will go to the rescue of the great white chief and with him will meet Captain Middleton and his friends beyond the gate in the forest where barked the fox at the setting of the last moon."

Then we held council, Jonathan Blake, Acuera, the great war-chief and I. It was decided that I, with the Coosaw and the young Englishman—under the guidance of the Indian who had entered the room with Lumulgee—was to hurry with the three women to the gate, making the greatest possible speed. Once

through the gate we were to enter the forest and there await our friends. Lumulgee was to leave with Master Bernard Schinking my commands that he with my soldiers and such of the Choctaws as the war-chief could spare, should hold the Spaniards in check or lead them about the city, moving always towards the gate but keeping well away from the fort, until hearing the signal of the war-chief. Then should they make directly for the gate, while the war-chief was to take such of his braves as he chose and going to the dungeon was to break down the newly-built walls and bring out Colonel Huguenin; then, sounding the "Come to me," of his nation he would hasten to the gate and there, joined by Master Schinking, they would together leave the city and march to us in the forest.

Such were the plans mapped out, and no sooner were they decided upon than we set about doing them. On our way to the secret passage, by which the women were to be conducted from the palace, we entered the great room where we had found the Governor, but I noticed that the Spaniard whom I had left dying at my feet, run through by my sword, was no longer among the dead men who lay upon the floor. I pointed to the spot where he had fallen.

"Was it you who moved the body of the Spaniard, the nephew of the Governor, Lumulgee?" I asked.

The Indian chief made a sign of negation, then seizing one of the torches that lighted the room, and wrenching it from its bracket, he pressed open the panel door and looked closely at the floor just within the passage.

"Captain Middleton will have need to walk with drawn sword and keen eyes," he said, straightening up and motioning towards the dark doorway. "His enemy has gone before him into the secret way, of which he knows all the dark turnings, and he went not unarmed."

We left the war-chief and moved forward, guided by his brave. The last sound from the outer world that fell upon my ear as the inner door of that dark way closed upon us was the call of the chief to his warriors in the palace, and the first sound that reached me as the steps at the other end were lifted was the same call, uttered by the same voice, and without the palace walls. We tarried not to push the stairs in place nor to close the outer door, but went swiftly forward—our guide leading; I, with Antoinette's hand clasped firmly in mine, followed closely behind; then came Jonathan Blake with his sister, and, last, Acuera with the

old black woman whom he allowed scant time for breathing.

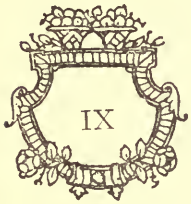
We turned down a narrow street towards the gate. The street was so dark and rough that it was impossible for us to make any great speed. From the houses on both sides could be heard the terrified cries and groans of the inmates. From time to time the street would be choked with people, men, women and children, often with some few of their household treasures hastily snatched up, and all fleeing to the fort. They passed us, sometimes pressing us along with them, but never recognizing us as the enemies from whom they fled, so dark was the street and so great was their haste. We had but just disentangled ourselves from a party of these terrified fugitives and turned into a still narrower street that led more directly to the gate, when the flare of a torch lighted the street in front of us. The man who bore it ran back shouting some signal. Other lights flashed out and showed me the street filled with Spanish soldiers. I threw my arms about Antoinette, and shouting to those who followed me, turned to flee in the direction from which we had come, only to find myself faced by a crowd equally as great and well armed.

"Your weapons, men!" I cried. "Push the

women behind you. We can at least send some of the wretches to death before they reach us."

With our backs to the wall we waited their coming. Like a troop of demons they came whirling upon us. As a creature possessed I fought, cut, slashed and defended. I thought only of the girl behind me and that each of the fighting devils sought to get her in his power. If I was wounded, I felt not the sting, but fought on, conscious only of the call which the Indian at my side gave forth more than once and a mighty longing to hear him answered. As I fought there seemed to rise among that surging mass of fighting furies the face of the man whom I had seen lying at my feet in the great room of the palace, pierced through by my sword. He came, and others with him, in one mighty rush forward. I felt the weight of the Indian at my side as he sank down against me; I saw Jonathan Blake fall dead at his sister's feet; I heard Antoinette's agonized voice call my name. Then, all the worlds of the universe seemed to fall on my head and crush me to the earth.

"I thought only of the girl behind me."



I AWOKE into a world in which there was neither light nor sound. I lay on my back perfectly motionless, my arms at my side, staring up into the darkness, conscious only of my breathing and of winking my eyes.

Then I began to think, and the events of our march and of our entrance into Augustine came into my mind like a mighty rabble of fantastic ghosts crowding one upon the heels of the other. I remembered the secret passage, our rush into the Governor's great room, Lumulgee's blood-song, the evil expression on my enemy's handsome face. Antoinette's glad cry,—again I seem to hold her in my arms and my breath came in quick, hot gasps. I recalled our flight through the city, the glare of the torches, the Spanish soldiers, our fight,—four men against an hundred—and the blow that crushed in my skull. A flash of terror came into my thoughts and I stretched out my hands; then I dropped them to my side with a sigh of relief. I was in some place larger than my grave.

I became conscious of the hard rough surface on which I lay and attempted to rise only to sink back with a mighty throbbing in my head and the knowledge that my feet were fettered. I knew that I was in a Spanish prison and the darkness and the damp caused me to think of Lumulgee's description of the dungeon that the secret passage so nearly encircled. Then came a memory of the vault-like cell in which Antoinette had seen her father walled up and left to die of thirst and starvation. Perhaps such an end was reserved for me. At first the thought produced no sensation on my dulled brain, but gradually as the pain of the throbbing became less intense the horrible torture of such a death forced itself on me. My mind cleared and I determined to touch the confines of my prison-house, and by them, if possible, judge what fate had designed for me.

Again I attempted to rise, only to sink back with the feeling that all the worlds of the universe were revolving and throbbing in my head. I pressed my hands over my brow and felt of my hair, damp and blood-clotted from the wounds on my head. The touch of my fingers cooled my brain and at last by one movement at a time—between whiles pressing against my throbbing head my hands, chilled by their contact with the cold,

damp stones—I dragged myself forward and touched the walls of my dungeon. It was of masonry as rough as the floor on which I lay, and as damp. I crept along the wall until I discovered that it was of a size many times larger than a cell and of a shape other than rounding, for the corners were square.

Exhausted I sank down, resting against the wall, and at a considerable distance from the spot from which I had dragged myself. The room seemed filled with myriads of stars. They floated around me sparkling and in all the colors of the rainbow. I pressed my fingers over my eyes, then, removing them, I tried to see something besides the darkness and those ever-changing, floating, sparkling lights. Suddenly a thought came to me that was like a knife thrust— a knife thrust into the very core of my heart. I was not deaf, for I could hear the clanking of the chains on my feet, the beating of my heart and my own breathing; but I was —blind. Great God! blind. Made sightless by the blow on my head. With the despair of a lost soul I threw myself face down on the rough floor, heeding neither its dampness nor the noisome things that crawled over it. How long I lay there with that black despair gripping my heart or the terrible thoughts that passed through my reeling brain, God in

Heaven only knows. But when at last I turned my face upwards and lifted my eye-lids the same stars appeared, always floating, always changing, mocking my sightlessness with their brilliance. At length I grew more calm and my mind was filled with thoughts of Antoinette, Lumulgee, the men who followed me; what had been their fate? Of Jonathan Blake and the Indian who fought at my side I knew. I had seen the sword enter the heart of one; I had felt the weight of the other as he sank dying at——

That white star over there to my left, how steady it was. It neither mocked me by its brilliance nor by floating about in dizzy circles around my head. As I looked, the other brilliant, mocking stars floated away and disappeared. Again I pressed my fingers over my eyes, and from the bitter depths of my heart prayed to Him who had suffered death, crucified. I looked and—laughed aloud; I sat up, unmindful of the throbbing in my head; I clapped my hands from very joy like a happy child. For it was there still—that ray of light streaming through a chink in my dungeon wall, and I was not blind.

I know not how long a time I sat there, nor what were the thoughts that crowded themselves one after the other across the mirror of

my mind before, overpowered by fatigue, I sank down upon the rough floor and fell asleep. I was waked by the light of a torch flashed against my eyes. It was my gaoler, come to bring me food and drink and to look at my wounded head and to the security of my fetters. I spoke to him in French, asking of my imprisonment and the length of time that I had been there. He answered me with a curse, in a hoarse voice that suited well his villainous face, and after again flashing the torch before my eyes he went out, closing the heavy door behind him. I heard the bolts drop into place, then I turned to the food and drink that he had placed at my side. The hard, mouldy crusts I could not eat, but the water to my burning lips and parched throat was sweeter than any wine I had ever drunk. I drank it sparingly, saving some little to moisten a part of my shirt that I tore off and with which I laved my wounded head. I fell asleep, and waked and slept again, for I knew not how long. Sometimes the light shone through the crack in the wall and sometimes all was darkness. My gaoler's visits became more frequent, and some days I was given good wine as well as water and my food improved both in quality and quantity. On each occasion, though, he took good care to examine my fetters and to look narrowly about the floor and the walls as

though expecting me to make some effort to escape; but he never spoke or, by any sign, showed that he heard my questions. With no other application than water and wine, when I had it, my wounds began to heal and my head pained me no longer when I sat up or walked around my dungeon examining the walls and floor with my fingers.

I was so occupied when I heard the bolts shot back. The door opened, there was a sudden flare of torches and four guards entered. A man with a brutal, weather-beaten face—their officer I knew from his uniform—followed them, lantern in hand, and turned the light full upon me. For full two minutes he stood there staring at me, his hand upon his sword.

"I bear a message from the Governor of Florida. Will Captain Middleton signify when he will hear it?" He spoke English, but in the formal style of his own nation, and there was an insolence in his voice and manner that belied the courtesy of his words.

"I am a prisoner," I replied, speaking with what firmness I was able to command. "I am forced to receive the Governor of Augustine's message in any place or at any time that he may choose to send it. Do you come to lead me to my death?"

"I come to offer you freedom," he replied, regarding me so narrowly that I knew that he lied.

"At what price?" I demanded coldly, though my heart leaped at the very sound of the word.

"That you act as guide to the stronghold of the Choctaw Indians," he answered. "The young Governor of Augustine would seek out their war-chief and avenge the death of his uncle."

"And rob their temple," I could have answered with all truth, but did not. Instead, I asked calmly enough, "And the alternative if I refuse?"

"Death by any means that the Governor may choose," he answered, with a fiendish leer.

"At such a price I refuse to buy my freedom. You may so inform your Governor, and tell him that I am ready for his torture."

"He gives you until to-morrow to think. At this hour I will come to lead you forth to freedom if you are wise, to death if you still refuse."

"You need not wait," I told him. "My answer to-day will be my answer to-morrow, or a month, a year, aye, verily, a life time hence. The Choctaws are my friends; I will never betray them."

"I will inform the Governor of your decision," he replied, formally, and sweeping me a bow of mocking deference he passed through the door, his guards following him.

I saw no more of my gaoler. All that day and the next, until the hour appointed, I fasted. When that time arrived the same officer made his appearance with ten instead of four of his Spanish guards. He spoke not a word, but, motioning towards me, two of his men stepped forward and clapped irons upon my wrists. Thus fettered, hands and feet, and walking among them, I left the damp, dark hole where I had spent so many weary, suffering hours, and walked through dark and narrow passages, up steps, through more passages and up more steps until at length I was brought into the presence of his Honor the Governor of Augustine. He sat in a gilded chair on a raised platform surrounded by guards. Other men, whom I knew to be dignitaries from the gold lace and the sparkling gems that bedecked their rich clothes, sat with him in the great hall. I judged that I was in the tribunal room of the fort where the Governor of Florida and his council sat in judgment on their enemies and ofttimes, when their humor suited, if report lied not, witnessed and directed the tortures.

Brought to the foot of the dais, I raised my

eyes and faced him who sat in the chair of honor. It was mine enemy, the young Spanish Apollo whom I had run through with my sword and left for dead in the great room of the Governor's palace. His eyes met mine with a malignant hatred glittering in their velvety depths that made me know that my hour of judgment would be as bitter as a devil's brain could plan and human hands execute. He was thinner than when I had first seen him and ghastly white, and the knowledge that the wound that I had given him was no pin prick caused me to meet his gaze with bold eyes and lips that almost smiled.

"I have sent for you, Captain Middleton, again to offer you your freedom, and to hear from your own lips your decision," he said in musical French, waving towards me a hand as white and shapely as any woman's and flashing with sparkling gems.

Then he repeated his offer, making the conditions that his officer of the guards had named. It was Lumulgee they wanted. The Indian who had entered Augustine and with his band of painted savages, assisted by a handful of English, murdered the Governor, killed five hundred people, torn down the walls of the dungeon and led forth out of the city, into the forest beyond their reach, the prisoners. They

sought revenge against the great war-chief and his nation in the name of his Gracious Majesty the King of Spain, and in his name offered me my freedom if I would lead his army over the route that we had passed and in sight of the great Indian village. When I made no answer, hoping to gain further tidings of my friends by silence, the old Spaniard who sat at the right hand of him who filled the Governor's chair leaned forward and spoke.

"Captain Middleton, you will not only be forgiven your own act of taking up arms against Augustine at a time when our two countries enjoy a season of peace, blessed by the brotherly love of our two royal masters, but a pardon will also be granted to all those who followed you from Charleston. And such an indemnity as shall be agreed upon by their most Gracious Majesties of England and Spain will be paid to you and Colonel Huguenin for your capture and imprisonment by our Indian allies, the Yemassees, though they went not at our bidding."

"Mademoiselle Huguenin, Mistress Moreton, and our slaves?" I asked.

"That also was a mistake," he assured me with such an appearance of sincerity that had I not received particulars of their capture and

known him to be a Spaniard, I would have believed that he spoke the truth. "Mistress Moreton and the slaves will be returned and such moneys paid for their capture and detention as their Majesties shall decide."

"And Mademoiselle Huguenin?" I demanded, letting him know that I had noticed the omission of her name.

The face of mine enemy flamed blood red.

"Mademoiselle Huguenin is the loyal subject of His Majesty the King of France," he replied. "At her desire I have sent a messenger to the French court praying her hand in honorable marriage of King Louis. She goes no more to Charleston. I am weary of your questioning and would have your answer unless you would return to your dungeon and there, fasting another day, make up your mind."

"My lord," I answered, looking him boldly in the eyes and smiling, "though I feasted or fasted twenty years my answer would be the same. Though you could give me an hundred lives and all the wealth of your King, both in Spain and in the Indies, double ten times over, I would not do the deed you ask of me. I have faced death many a time and I know that to the prisoners and enemies of Spain he often comes

in tortures most terrible; still it is only death—naught else. My lord, I am your enemy and your prisoner; do your worst."

He glared at me with a hatred so great that the beauty of his face disappeared and he looked an imp from hell.

"Go! drag in the cage," he cried, flinging up his hand in a gesture of imperious command to the officer who had brought me in.

He went, and soon hearing the noise of lumbering wheels I turned and saw—dragged on a heavy wooden cart—that instrument of death about whose tortures I had heard reports most terrible. It was the iron cage of Augustine. They slid it off the cart, and when it stood upright it appeared an iron coffin built for a man both broad and tall. With curses they thrust me into it—my back against its solid bottom. They screwed down my arms at wrists and elbows; fastened the collar about my throat; the bars across my body; and then, shoving it back to its wooden wheels, they dragged it out—out of the tribunal room, out of the cool dusk of the long passageway with its tall vaulted roof, out on the sea-wall and under sun-rays so intense that even my closed lids could not shut out the glare that burned into my eye-balls with a pain as terrible as molten lead. I pulled at my arms; I strove to turn my head, so deadened by the

"Full in the face she struck him who had hung me there."

torture of the pain in my eyes that I was not conscious of the sharpness of my fetters and the deep cuts they made in my flesh. It was to no avail. On they dragged me, while, faint as the dream of an echo, there came to my reeling brain the exultant shouts of the people, the curses of the soldiers and the clank of the iron chains as they hoisted me up and I swung out over the gate of the city. Deep down in my throat I thanked God that I stood once more on my feet and that my eyes looked not into the sun.

The torture of the glare becoming less intense, I opened my eyes and saw the jeering faces of the people who crowded on the sea-wall mocking me. I heard their taunting shouts and curses; I heard the noise of the city below and the roar of the waves outside; but, over and above it all, I was conscious of the terrible heat of the sun beating down upon my iron coffin, and the horrible thirst that tormented me. The people mocked on; they threw sticks and stones; they hissed and spat at me. I heeded them not but tugged at my arms until the sharp fetters cut deep into my flesh and I could feel the blood trickle down my hand and drop off my fingers, until I longed to be a dog that I might lap my own blood. Then my eyes closed and darkness slipped down over

me, blotting it all out. When next I looked the sun was low in the heavens, my cage had swung around towards the sea, and the salt breeze fanned me, cooling both body and brain. I watched the sun sink out of sight; I saw the shimmer of moonlight far out at sea.

The city slept and the noises of the forest and the lap of the waves on the shore came to me soothingly. Again the darkness came down and I knew no more until the sun rode high in the heavens and beat down upon me with a heat and brilliancy that made the whole world a fiery furnace. My tongue was parched and swollen; myriads of gnats and small flies swarmed around my face, stinging and biting me. I prayed for death and dreamed it came. My dream ended and I knew that it rained. Big, beautiful crystal drops fell and clung to the bars that held me. I twisted my head, put out my tongue and tried to touch them, but could not. My fetters cut deep into my sore and swollen flesh, and once more darkness covered it all.

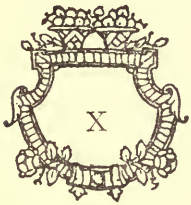
I floated, floated, floated, while thousands of glad, bright faces smiled upon me. My mother, my sisters, all the friends that I had ever known, both in the old world and the new, were around me. Mistress Moreton? Yes, Mistress Moreton, white-faced and terrified, and Marcie, with

great round eyes, in which there was only terror; my enemy, with hatred in his eyes and a mocking smile on his lips; Antoinette——

It was the sight of her face that aroused me. The three walked on the sea-wall with the Spaniard. Antoinette's face was ghost-white as she gazed at me. The little spark of life left in my body flared up as my eyes met hers. She called my name. Then the blood flamed red in her cheeks and she turned and, full in the face, she struck him who had hung me there.

Again I thought I died. Soft fingers played with my hair, caressed my cheeks. As a dream remembered in a dream came the thoughts of my past life and those whom I held dear. I was in England, in Charleston, in mine own house, with my mother, with Antoinette—I opened my eyes. It was the mist, the blessed mist. What the rain would not do it had done. My clothes were saturated, the thirsty pores of my skin had drunk their fill. It had crept between my lips, and my swollen tongue was no longer parched. I felt a dreamy happiness and looked out over the shrouded city with a smile on my lips. Lights came to me dimly, and figures of men pressed around me like shadows. As echoes, far distant echoes, the sound of voices came to me. I heard the clank of the chains and felt the sway of the cage. Some

one spoke to me,—spoke English. They touched me with friendly hands, broke the fetters that bound me and lifted me out of that iron coffin.



"BULLY BOY; bully boy! Yes, it's beauty that wins the race, my boy," were the words that struck my ears. "First came the English giant that we picked from the Spanish galleon off Panama—made him mate, all on account of his smooth face and big limbs, yes, mate of the gallant ship York. Now comes this little French count; not so tall as you, Sim, by half an hand-breadth—not by a whole hand-breadth—yea, verily, not by two hand-breadths, man. Shorter by two whole hand-breadths, I say, Sim, my man. Remember he's not so tall as you by three hand-breadths, Sim Taviss, my bully boy. But, because of his red cheeks and flowing locks he's the very cock-o-the-walk. Struts over the deck, keeps his women to himself so that better men may not even look at them, orders us all about—yes, I say it—orders the last man jack on board, the mate, the Cap'n,—even you, Sim Taviss, even you," the voice went on as though striving to mollify some angry man while at

the same time acknowledging the justice of his wrath.

I felt the motion of the ship; I heard the swish of the water, the noise and the voices of the men on deck. Cautiously I opened my eyes to judge where I was and to see what manner of men they were who conversed so near me. I was lying on a bunk in the forecastle and in the half light could see but one man. His back was towards me and he busied himself with some garment that he held on his knees. His shoulders were narrow and stooping, and his long, pear-shaped head was covered with lanky red or sandy hair. More I could not distinguish, but lying still and listening after a time I discovered that he was speaking to himself. His voice was soft, with something of the cadence of childhood in it despite the indignation of its tone. Without moving, I watched him cautiously, listening.

"Fine feathers make fine birds, Simeon," he went on. "You learned that of wise Master Hezekiah Toole, who beat you sorely striving to get some of his wisdom into your dull brain. But what is wisdom, lad? Nothing, nothing. It doesn't count a feather's weight in helping a man along in the world. Consider Master Hezekiah with all the languages of the world dropping from his tongue's end, then consider

yourself. He is but the master in the school of a dirty village, doomed all his life to nod over a desk where his blockhead scholars drone out their lessons, while you, man, you, are first kitchen boy to the gallant ship York and soon to be head cook, surgeon, mayhap mate so soon as you can make the English lout to swallow some white powder which you will know about when you can get your hands on the surgeon's great books. Yes, it is beauty that wins the race as I shall presently show you, Sim Taviss. Beauty and wit, my boy, both of which you have in plenty."

Here he left off work and, rising, threw about his shoulders a woman's cloak of faded blue velvet lined with yellow. He was scarce above four and a half feet tall, with large splay feet and wondrously lean shanks. He turned and twisted, prinking himself before a broken glass that he held—now taking in one section, then another of his small person.

"Now for the shoes, lad, now for the shoes," and he began busily removing his shoes and hammering on to the heels tapering wedges of wood. These he smeared with red paint and shoving his misshapen feet back into them, stood his mirror on the floor and surveyed the result with exclamations of delight.

"Such feet, such legs, Sim," he said. "All

they needed was the proper dressing to make them the handsomest this side of Whitehall. You are the very devil for beauty, my boy, the very devil for beauty. Now for the scent on your hair and the red paint on your cheeks, and the gallant hat with its long drooping feather. You will take the wind out of all their sails, for the Captain will not be able to take his eyes off thee, thou strutting, swaggering devil with thy handsome face and figure and thy fine clothes."

He ran his dirty, claw-like fingers, reeking with oil, through his hair, and rubbed it in until it was several shades darker and dripping with grease.

"Zooks! man, such love-locks and such sweet red cheeks!" he exclaimed, plastering the hair on the top and the sides of his head with vigorous strokes, and daubing on his cheeks the remainder of the paint left from his shoe heels. Then leaning down, he drew from some place I could not see a broad Spanish hat with a draggled plume, and clapped it on his head.

"What will he say to you, man, when you bring him his first dish of broth?" he exclaimed in a very ecstasy of admiration puffing himself out and gazing into his cracked bit of mirror. "Will he call thee kitchen-boy? Not he. He will say in his gallant, commanding

voice—and loud—yes, loud, that all may hear —'Sit thee down, Sim Taviss, thou handsome devil, at my right hand. Sit thee down, mate'—yes, he will call thee mate. I warrant he will call thee mate this very day, thou lucky dog."

Here he fronted towards me and I nearly burst out laughing. His face looked as though it had been drawn through a key-hole first up, then down. His nose, that should have been long and hooked at the end, became a flat and jaunty pug, while the outward corners of both his eyes and his mouth turned up after trying in vain to keep their downward lines. Indeed, all of his features appeared to have been planned on a long and lugubrious model but, before completion, by some mishap, they had received an upward turn which, with his painted cheeks and faded finery, made a figure that was ludicrous beyond anything I had ever gazed upon. I stared at him with wide opened eyes but he was too much engrossed with admiring himself to notice aught else.

"By my faith! Sim Taviss," I exclaimed, rising on my elbow and gazing at him admiringly. "You do make a gallant show." He started back and gazed at me with fear written over every line of his face and in his shallow blue eyes. "A gallant show, man. And I'll

warrant you are as brave a gentle as ever drew sword. But where is your blade, man; where's your blade?"

He drew away from me, shrinking into the farthest corner.

"'Tis not fear that makes you shrink from me, man," I continued, sitting up and looking at him encouragingly, "that I'll swear. I see your courage written in your eyes, and know that you fear no man, living or dead."

He still gazed at me as though seeing in me some one new risen from the dead.

"Art an Englishman?" I asked hoping to cure him of his fear, that I might gain some knowledge of my condition.

He gave assent with his head though his tongue spluttered and his lips refused to form words. I saw that he strove to unfasten the clasp of the velvet cloak that he had flung over his shoulders and, as though granting permission to a guest, "Yes, take it off, friend." I said. "'Tis a hot day though I have lived in hotter places."

He nodded his head knowingly.

"They took you from the iron cage of Augustine," he answered. "And the French count said that you had hung there two days."

"Why did they take me down?" I asked. The giddiness in my head which had troubled

me when I first sat up disappeared, so eager was I to hear his answer.

"'Twas his humor," he replied, making a deprecating gesture with his smutty hands; "and therefore the Cap'n's humor, as it has been ever since we met the French Count in the streets of Augustine and he knocked the sword out of the Cap'n's hand. The Cap'n makes every man on board do his bidding."

"How came you to meet him in the streets of Augustine?" I asked, puzzled more and more by the things that he told.

"We boarded the merchant ship that lay in the harbor," he answered, coming out of the corner into which he had shrunk. "And when we had manned her and sent her out the Cap'n swore he'd enter the city and bring out the treasure from the palace. We climbed the walls. I reached the top first and—"

"You!" I exclaimed, looking at the little spit of a man in amazement. Then, seeing the shame in his face cover the braggart in his eye, I concealed the doubt in my mind with a knowing laugh. "I'll warrant you did, Sim. You were the first to reach the top and cut down a Spanish Don."

"No," he answered, lack of imagination bringing him back to the truth. "The mist covered the harbor and the city so thick that

the Spaniards neither saw nor heard us. We'd marched half the distance to the palace when we came upon the French Count with his English aunt and her black woman—"

"In the streets?" I cried, amazed at hearing of such a trio walking the streets of Augustine at an hour past midnight, though I had begun to realize that the ship captain who stole into harbors and sent away merchantmen and then clambering the walls of the city to rob the palace of its treasures, held doubtful papers, and was like to meet with strange adventures.

"Yes, making their escape from the Governor's palace where they had been held prisoners ever since they had been brought captives to the city, taken by a Spanish ship on their way to Charleston. It's a fighting-cock is this same little Count," he exclaimed, forgetting his fear and warmed by admiration of the man whom he described. "When we came upon them in the streets, did he run? Not he. He whipped out his sword and, like a very devil, attacked the Cap'n who was leading. Beat his blade up and down, then out of his hand and would have run him through the body had I not run up in the very nick of time with drawn sword, and pistol and knife held ready and sent his sword whirling against the wall and put his men to—"

"Whose men?" I exclaimed, trying to keep up with the fight that he described with so much enthusiasm.

"The French Count's men. He had near fif—"

"But you said he was alone with his English aunt and her serving woman," I told him. Then it came to me and I knew the quality of his metal. "Go on, go on," I cried. "What did they do?"

"He said to the Cap'n as grand as though he was the king himself, 'Pick up your sword, sir. I touch not an unarmed man.' Hearing him speak good English the Cap'n demanded to know who he was and where he went with his women. He told of their capture and their long imprisonment and his determination to escape from the city, preferring to trust to the savages and the beasts of the forest rather than remain longer in the clutches of the Spanish Governor. Then the Cap'n, for the sake of his English tongue and his good sword, offered to take them safe out of the city to some harbor where they could ship for England or Charleston. 'Your ship, sir?' said the Count to the Cap'n, looking at the men who crowded up the street before him. 'The York, one hundred and fifty tons, twenty-five guns, one hundred and seven men, and Tom Hawkins,

Cap'n.' 'Ah,' said my lord, bowing low, 'Captain Thomas Hawkins of Sir Henry Morgan's fleet?'"

"Sir Henry Morgan!" I exclaimed, startled by the mention of the famous pirate chief. Then I recovered myself and motioned the fellow to continue. "Tell their whole converse. What did the Captain answer?"

"'The same, my lord,' said he, returning the Count's bow. 'And since you know so well my name will your lordship have the goodness to tell me by what name you are called?'—I can tell you that the men all pressed up to hear for they were mighty curious to know the name of one who could beat the sword out of the Cap'n's hand, but could also make him stop, a bowing and a scraping, in the streets of Augustine, forgetful alike of his own and his men's danger and of the good Spanish gold in Governor's palace. The Count asked, 'Do you sail for Hispaniola, Captain Hawkins?' 'Yes, my lord,' said the Cap'n. 'I have sent ahead the good prize caught in the harbor and we follow fast on her heels.' 'Then we'll go with you,' said the Count, slipping his sword back into its scabbard. 'For I count many friends, good and true, among Morgan's buccaneers. My father spent several years

amongst them and I have a sister who resembleth me much who was born on Hispaniola.' "

"Born on Hispaniola!" I cried, Master Bernard Schinking's story of Colonel Huguenin's life coming back to me. "And what said he was his name?"

Sim Taviss looked at me stupidly. Then, after a time, he said, scratching his head, "Though I asked every man on board they none of them could tell me, they are such monstrous thick-heads. Had I been there I would have heard every word and not forgotten it—no not—"

"Ho, ho! my fine gentleman," I thought, "All this beautifully embroidered story comes to me second hand. You were not there." Aloud I asked,

"Then they came on board?"

"Not until the Cap'n had said that he would take you from the iron cage. For, you see the Count would not stir a foot until you had been taken out. Said that you had led a party of Indians into the city and taken his father out of the Spanish prison and—"

"God in Heaven! man," I cried more astonished than I can express. "He said that I had taken his father,—his father—out of prison?"

"That is what he said, for so all the men who stood near told me when they returned," Sim declared. "You'd taken his father out but had been taken yourself. And because you would not lead the Spanish Governor and his band of robbers into the country of the Indians who had come with you they had hung you in the cage and left you there to die. Then the Cap'n went and took you down, though it was precious near day and brought you to the ship and here you have lain ever since and the Count has ordered me to attend you."

I turned so that I might gaze full into the face of the man who had told me all this jumble of truth and fiction; for I would judge, if possible, where the lies left off and the facts began, for facts I knew he had, though where he got them from and with what measure of lies they were mixed I could not tell.

"What does this French Count look like?" I asked failing to get his name and hoping to judge by his resemblance if he were in truth the son and brother of the Huguenins. Though I knew full well that no such son or brother had ever existed. "Is he small or tall and what is the color of his eyes?"

"He is not so tall as me, not by a whole hand-breadth, not—"

"What does the Captain call him?" I de-

manded, starting on another tack knowing that I could never get the truth concerning his appearance. "When he speaks to him, does he never call him by any name?"

His face shone, and I knew that his answer would be the truth.

"Yes, he calls him Count Uldric," he replied. "But I cannot think of the other part, which is such a curious twisting of letters."

"Huguenin," I suggested. "Uldric Huguenin."

Again his face shone. "Yes," he cried. "The very name; Count Uldric Huguenin."

I put my hand to my head, puzzled. Antoinette's brother! And though I had counted myself her father's closest friend I had never heard of him.

"He wears most wondrously beautiful clothes," Sim went on, as though speaking to himself once more, and I saw that he regarded his bit of mirror longingly. "Though hang and quarter me if I know what—"

"Sim, Sim Taviss, thou red-headed devil, where art thou?" bawled a great voice that sounded as though it came from the bowels of the ship. "Where art thou, I say, thou lazy varlet? Not for a minute can I take my hand from thy collar," the voice continued to shout, sounding at last as though its owner had

mounted deck and was quite near us. "Where is the little devil? Let me but lay my hands on—"

The door burst open and a most villainous face thrust itself inside.

"So I've found ye," bawled this fiendish looking creature thrusting in a mighty hand and arm and dragging out my boaster dressed in all of his finery, though he tried hard to divest himself of it, only to leave behind one of his gaudily heeled shoes.

"By all the fiends!" the voice thundered, and I could hear the scuffling of feet and knew that Sim sought to free himself from the clutches of the fiery-faced giant. "If the young devil hasn't been getting himself up like a fine gallant. Ho, ho!" and there followed a mighty roar of laughter. Then sounded the scurrying of feet, as of men running from all quarters of the deck, and of others joining in the merriment.

"In the Devil's name what is all this?" demanded a voice, which I knew to be, both from its power and the command of its tone, the Captain's. "What does this mean, this crowding the deck. I will send— What have you there, cook? Ho, ho!" he roared and the rest laughed with him.

"Look! my lord," he cried, and I knew that

there was but one on board whom he would so address. "See what overturn you have caused on my good ship. Even the kitchen-boys would follow your fashions."

"And by my troth! Captain, it is vastly becoming," answered a voice, the sound of which made me so forget myself and my weak condition that I bounded up and came near falling from my bunk in giddiness. "So thou lovest red-heeled shoes, Simeon?" the voice went on tauntingly. "And would have thy cheeks rival thy head? Thou pretty fool! Would that King Louis could have thee, then would he not grieve longer for his L'Angeli. And the gallant Captain, whom I commanded thee to attend; what says he to thy brave clothes?"

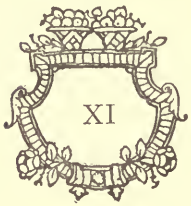
There was a splutter that I could not understand; then followed a burst of laughter and the same high-pitched voice that was of a sweetness that passed all music, exclaimed: "As brave as any gentle that ever drew blade, said he? Then, Captain, I think thy honorable prisoner hath come to his full senses and should grace the deck with his presence. Go L'Angeli, Captain Hawkins's L'Angeli, seek out the surgeon and bid him visit the English prisoner, and if he be recovered and in his right mind bring him on deck. What! thou red-faced devil. Loose thy hold on the boy, or

by—" There followed such a torrent of villainous oaths that I sat stupefied that I should have so far lost my senses as ever to have imagined the voice had the sound of Antoinette's.

Like the veriest dolt I sat there staring before me with unseeing eyes, my wits knocked so far from their base that I could not even listen understandingly to what passed on deck. There was but one question in my brain, and that came to me but dully. Who was this blackguard that had been taken from an English ship on his way to Charleston and who, found in the streets of Augustine, had refused succor offered by the pirates, of whom he knew right well, unless they rescued me. a stranger,—rescued me, who had never heard even of his existence? So I sat when Sim Taviss again made his appearance followed by a man who looked a surgeon to an ox, though I found his huge red hands did not lack gentleness when he examined my head and the wounds made by the fetters on my arms and ankles.

They delivered their message from the French nobleman ordering me on deck as though no man had a better right to give orders on their ship. After a few steps the giddiness left my head and walking between them I went up to meet the man to whom, in some measure

at least, I owed my deliverance, if deliverance it could be called,—this changing from the power of the Spaniard at Augustine to the pirates of Hispaniola.



THE air was soft and the sun sunken low among fleecy clouds when we came on deck. The surgeon halted that I might recover breath and gain control of my limbs which trembled beneath me more from lack of use than from weakness. It was like heaven to walk once more unfettered under the sky and feel the cool salt breeze against my cheek. The sea smiled and dimpled, green, red and gold, and as far as the eye could reach there was no sight of land nor moving thing save the white sails and the shape of a ship that followed our course some two miles farther west.

"That is our consort, the prize taken before Augustine," the man at my side said, lifting a huge hand and pointing to the sails that shone gold-tipped beneath the sun rays.

Following his movement my eyes riveted on the deep scar that encircled his arm above the wrist. He saw the gaze and answered it.

"I too have swung in the iron cage at Au-

gustine," he said raising his other arm and showing a like scar. "I was a ship surgeon, a man of peace, earning my few pounds a year, when our ship was attacked on the high seas by Spaniards. I was amongst those taken captive to Augustine and I lay in their damp and noisome dungeon, only taken out when for lack of sport less cruel they led me forth to be stretched on the rack; to be hung to four posts by my thumbs and great toes, while they piled stones in the hollow of my belly, or be put to some other such torture that only devils could originate and Spaniards enjoy. I endured this all for ten years—ten years that seemed like centuries—and could not die. Finally one day, from no other reason than an idle whim or because my tortures ceased to amuse him, the Governor ordered me to the cage that I might at last serve as sport for the people. God was kind at last. After ten long years he remembered me; for on the first night that I swung there, the city was attacked by Morgan's buccaneers who released me."

"You became one of them?" I questioned, gazing into his calm blue eyes which was the one redeeming feature of his hideously scarred countenance—though now that I knew the origin of those scars his face no longer seemed villainous.

"Not then," he answered. "Even then I was not willing to turn my hand against my fellow creatures and ship under the black flag, though God in heaven knows that I had suffered enough in that cursed city to make me turn against the whole world. The buccaneers put me ashore at Jamestown and from that colony I took boat to England to search for my old mother."

After waiting a short space for him to speak, I asked, "You found her?"

"Yes," he answered. "Lying dead in a workhouse."

"A workhouse!" I exclaimed, for there was that about the man, despite the roughness of his face and his unlawful profession, that made one feel he had been a gentleman before he was a pirate.

"A gentlewoman born and bred, she died alone in the home so grudgingly supplied by her native town to its pauper outcasts. She had lived there five years, having spent the last farthing of her slender property in her efforts to gain my release." He stopped speaking, and I saw his great hands clench and the cords in his scarred neck grow tense. "When I looked upon her dead face," he continued, "I knew that the tortures which I had endured had been as nothing compared to her sufferings.

I buried her; then I left England and joined Sir Henry Morgan's fleet. Whenever we come to these hunting-grounds, we go not away until we attack the city of Augustine or the shipping that lies in her harbor. It is so stipulated in the papers that bind me to this ship."

"They are a cruel people—these Spaniards," I said, remembering the people, men, women and children who had crowded the sea-wall that they might jeer at me and watch my sufferings—aye, even young babies had been brought that they might shake their little fists and spit at me. "They have not compassion even for creatures of their own kind."

"Not even the compassion of devils born in the depths of hell!" he exclaimed. "They gibe and gloat over the sufferings of their fellow creatures." His eyes were as burning coals and his brow as dark and threatening as a storm cloud at nightfall. It needed no telling for me to know the fate of the Spaniards who fell into his hands.

"Master Surgeon," I questioned, "tell me how do I stand with the captain of your ship? I know neither why he took me from the cage nor what end he designs for me."

"Captain Hawkins is an Englishman, Captain Middleton," he replied. "Though he sails under the black flag and does many things

which the court at home thunders against, and which the action of your Governor under the commands of the company that he serves makes crimes, he wars not against those who speak his native tongue, nor any other for that matter, save only that of the race which by its cruelty and greed has made enemies of the rest of mankind."

"And the young French nobleman, with his aunt and her serving woman whom he met in the streets of Augustine?" I queried.

"The captain of the York is a strange man," he answered, with a grim smile. "He has a weakness that some day may prove his undoing. No man living more admires a pretty face or a handsome form. The young French count has both, and because of them more than either his race or his swordsmanship, he and the two women of his party are as honored guests on board this ship." Then he moved forward, keeping me at his side.

"It is the Count's pleasure to sit on the poop deck with his aunt and her woman, but ofttimes when they are below the Captain goes there to dice with him," he said, as we passed along the deck and by pirates whom I knew to be brutal and daring, though they looked not worse than many seamen on board honest ships. "It is there that I was ordered to conduct you."

When we had climbed the poop ladder I saw that two men sat at a small table and diced intently. The one whose face was towards me was tall and rawboned, and with a countenance so far from comeliness that to know of his admiration of beauty in others was a guarantee of the wondrous generosity of his nature. The hair that framed his long weather-beaten face, with its woebegone expression, was a rusty black and fell in straggled straight locks to his shoulders. His wide hat, with its high crown, and his clothes were of the same rusty black and together with his large solemn eyes, he appeared an hundred times nearer a second-rate country parson than the captain of a pirate ship. He who sat with him was slenderly built and of a symmetry that made every line of his figure a marvel of grace. His back was toward me and his broad hat with its long plume was pulled so far forward that only the round curve of his chin, which, his elbow on the table, he rested in his open palm, was visible to my eyes.

Captain Hawkins left off his gaming and came to greet me with a dignity that made me know him at least a man of breeding, if not of high rank before he was a pirate.

"Though I stand under the law of your colony, a criminal for many deeds, Captain Middleton," he said, "and perhaps you in

your heart rate me a friend unworthy an honest man, I could not leave an Englishman and so gallant a soldier as report bespeaks you, at Augustine and to the tortures of their iron cage. As a guest I brought you to my ship and will promise to set you down at some place where you will find ship to your own city."

I thanked him, both for himself and the men who followed him, and though my words were few I am sure the grip of the hand that I extended to him unasked, and the earnestness of my manner, made him know me sincere.

"It is to the Count Uldric Huguenin that you owe thanks for your rescue," he answered my words and hand-clasp, turning towards the man who now sat dicing with himself. "We were bent on the treasure in the Governor's palace, and might not have had opportunity to seek out the iron cage had he not persuaded us to leave the one and rescue the other."

"Nay, Captain Middleton," the young count exclaimed in a voice that I would have sworn to as Antoinette's, had the man not sat there within touch of my hand, "I did but follow my sister's commands. She bade me leave not that cursed city until I had rescued you." Here he stretched out his shapely legs, covered by red silk stockings clocked with gold, crossed his feet, daintily balancing one brightly polished

shoe with its square toe and its high red heel upon the other. "She has the devil's own temper, the devil's own temper, has Mistress Antoinette Huguenin, as thou well knowest, Captain Middleton."

"I know her to be a lady of rare sweetness, my lord," I told him, my voice shaken by the indignation aroused in me by his words and the carelessness of his tone. "And of a steadfast courage surpassing any man."

"Yes, verily she is steadfast," he answered, busily shaking the little cubes and clapping the box down on the table. "Of such a stubborn steadfastness that I was forced to leave her behind me in Augustine. I could not dissuade her; she but waits the return of her messenger from the French court craving permission of King Louis for her to wed with the young Spanish Governor, Captain Middleton."

"My lord," I said,—and the summer that had sung in my heart through all the blackness of my tortures and despair because of the knowledge that Antoinette loved me gave place to a darkness that shut out the very sunlight while my limbs trembled beneath me and I leaned heavily against the ship rail— "My lord, it seems but yesterday eve that they walked on the sea-wall and I saw her strike him angrily in the face."

"She told me of it," he assured me, leaving the dice on the table and turning his body more fully towards me, though the movement gave me not a better view of his face. "It is the way of women; there is no accounting for either their actions or their words. Even my aunt—you have never seen her, Captain Middleton, though she is now on board this ship as the guest of this gallant Captain—hath her whims. She loves so well her English home that she has ever considered it rank treason to enter France and could not be persuaded to visit his court though invited by King Louis himself. Her black woman—whom also you are yet to see for the first time, Captain Middleton,—hath acts beyond the comprehension of mortal man. She is as silent as a graven image, since she has come on board this galleon, and often sits and stares at me as at a thing possessed. They all have maggots in their brains, all women. Mistress Moreton—whom you know right well, Captain Middleton, and who with the black slave Marcie is soon to be returned to Charleston, with a goodly number of pieces of eight, to salve her pride and pacify your Governor—has a brain badly eaten by these little worms. She is mad for the mating of Antoinette with the Don, advising her most earnestly against following me out of Augustine, though she

could give no reason for her desire. Now, Captain Hawkins," he cried turning towards the pirate chief, " I'll warrant you cannot guess the reason which this sister of mine—whom Captain Middleton praises so highly—gives for wishing to wed the Spanish Governor."

" I know not, my lord," the captain of the York replied. " I have small acquaintance with women and pretend not to understand their whims and fancies."

" It is more than a fancy, Sir Captain," the young nobleman assured him. " She is simply dying of love for this Spaniard, ready to drop down at his feet for very lovesickness. She gives as her reason, Captain Middleton, that he calls her not a termagant, and has never told her that she has the temper of a shrew."

" My lord," I cried, and there was a feeling in my heart that even I myself did not understand. " My lord, I follow not the meaning of your jest."

He threw out his hand as though motioning aside my question—just such a hand as his sister had given me to kiss, and as white. Then springing to his feet he walked forward, shading his eyes with his hand, and gazed out towards the ship captured before Augustine.

His was a most surprising beauty. His long black curls fell below his shoulders, rivalling in

glossiness his coat of red and yellow brocade. His long vest was of white satin wrought in gold thread and pearls, his short breeches were of velvet, the color of a summer cloud, and over the bosom of his fine muslin shirt flowed the long ends of his Steinkirk neckcloth of priceless lace. The handsomeness of his figure could not be over praised and he had the dignity and command of manner and bearing befitting the son of an hundred kings.

"Captain Hawkins," he cried, his gaze still on the sea, "if my eyes deceive me not, your prize flies again the colors of Spain."

The buccaneer chief at my side gave the snort of a war horse when it first scents battle; his eyes flashed forth the blue flame of a good blade when it is quickly drawn from its scabbard; he rushed forward, clapped glasses to his eyes and stood at my lord's side gazing out at his lately captured consort. Other of the pirates, seeing his action, hastened to that side the ship or climbed up in the rigging. The mate, a tall giant with fair curls and the face and figure of a fierce and beautiful god, clambered up the poop ladder and went whirling past me to his Captain's side. My lord turned towards me, swept off his hat and looked me squarely in the face. I reeled back as though struck a deadly blow. The sea and sky came together and

whirled about me in one mighty mass of blackness. There was a roar like the deep sea in my ears and the shouts and calls of the pirates as they rushed about on deck trying to signal their comrades on board the merchantman. Their angry cries and blasphemous oaths when they realized that it had by some means, again fallen into the hands of its Spanish crew, came to me but faintly. Through it all and over it all there was a singing, singing, singing—bright flowers sprang up all about me—summer again entered my heart and I knew that its reign was eternal.

"Captain Middleton is ill, Master Mate," that high, sweet voice that I had heard so often in my dreams both by day and by night, exclaimed.

"'Tis an illness that will pass, my lord," the mate's voice replied, and I thought there sounded in it a note of mocking suspicion.

"Until it pass, sir, I would have you see him carried to his bed and properly tended." There was the command of royalty itself in that tone. "He is a true friend of my father, and a gallant soldier and gentleman. It would ill befit my father's son to see him suffer."

"An your father's son had never seen him before, my lord?" questioned the mate. I thought his voice was still more mocking.

"That is a misfortune, Sir Mate, that he has already begun to remedy. I would have him moved below."

I lifted my head from the table and arose from the chair into which I had fallen.

"I need no assistance, my lord, though I am not well and unfit to be on deck. I will bid you good night and go below." I swept him a bow in which there was all the deference of my whole heart and soul, and turned and left him standing on the poop deck, face to face with the mate.

UNTIL the moon sank, and then by starlight, they chased that merchant ship recaptured by its Spanish crew. As I lay on my bunk—where I had remained all night at the command of the captain delivered by the surgeon—I could hear the storm that raged on deck above my head. Towards morning there was a lull which a few hours later was succeeded by hubbub the like of which I had never heard before. There was a mighty rattling of cordage, a creaking of sails and the course of the ship changed. I peered out into the now bright light of good dawn and saw at no great distance the ship that yesterday had sailed as our consort, and, with only a short space between them, a galleon, heavily armed, and flying the Spanish colors.

We were bearing straight down upon them and I could see that the waste of dark waters between us grew rapidly less. Every moment the noise overhead increased until there seemed no sounds in the round world but that of blas-

phemous oaths, wild shouts, yells of rage, the tramp of hurrying feet, the clank of iron and the shriek of cordage. We gained so far that I could distinguish movements on board the two ships pursued. Then hopeless of flight they no longer sought to escape us but prepared to fight and stood waiting for the pirate to come within range of their guns.

The noise on board suddenly died out; not a sound came to my ears save the rush of the waves as the ship cut her way through them. Would the buccaneer dare to fight them single handed or would she again change her course while yet out of reach of their guns and sail on to her destination in the Indies? I questioned of myself. I waited—it seemed hours—with the suspense of that dead silence hanging above me, then unmindful of Captain Hawkins's commands, I rushed on deck.

Like grim devils, naked to their waists, the men of that pirate ship appeared in the rosy light of early dawn. They lay as immovable as statues or stood at their posts doing the tasks assigned them as dumb and silent as dead men. Their eyes were glued to the two ships that, with every heart beat, seemed visibly nearer. I passed among them unnoticed and clambering to the quarter-deck searched out a

place where I might see to good advantage, stood waiting.

It was not long. There came a stream of flame, a puff of smoke and a shot from a gun of the armed galleon tore shrieking through our canvas. It did small harm. Then another stream, another puff, and again our sail was cut. We sped on, making straight for the open space between the two Spanish ships. There was a blaze from both merchant ship and galleon. The shriek of shot sounded overhead; I heard the sharp crack of rending, splintering wood, and with a mighty rattling of ropes, our topmast fell on deck with its stretch of flapping canvas.

Captain Hawkins spoke over the rail.

I heard the mate pass the word below.

With a great leap the deck sprang forward, the flames of two broadsides lit the sea, flared up to heaven, and started a tumult that beat on my brain with one unceasing thud. Then the shriek of shot was again over our heads and among us. Our silence gave place to shouted curses, cries of hate and rage, shrieks and moans, both above and below. The men were no longer dumb but, like fiends incarnate, rushed from gun to gun, now bearing fresh charges, now to take the place of some com-

rade whom others bore groaning to the cockpit below. The deck was streaked with thick black streams that ran together and formed dark pools through which the naked feet splashed and became horrible to look upon. Another mast came crashing down, to be cut away and cast into the sea. Our sides belched fire and our deck was raked by that shrieking hail of death until every plank held a river of blood or was covered by a prostrate form whose contorted face showed hideous in the flashes of flame through the smoke.

A shot struck down the captain, and I heard his blood splash on the deck as they bore him past the spot where I stood. One leg had been torn off below the knee and his long weather-beaten countenance was like the livid face of a corpse. We were hard pressed. The tattered sails of the ships we fought loomed up, one on each side, close to our bulwarks. I could hear the shouts and the curses of those on their decks; I could see them hurrying hither and thither, then swarming to the nearer sides, and knew that they stood ready to throw their grappling irons and board us. The voice of the York's mate gave a sharp command, as he stood in the captain's place, towering up like some beautiful prince of demons surrounded by his imps in the sulphurous glare. Up from

below, from the very bowels of the ship, swarmed a crowd of half-naked men, their bodies smeared with blood and grimy dirt, their villainous faces showing the grim determination of those who know their cause to be in desperate straits. I noted the huge figure of the surgeon—huge even among this army of giants—and knew that all thought of the wounded and dying had been put aside in the effort to save the living. The ship had given up its last man to save the ship.

I saw the herd of savage creatures crowding against the rail of the galleon, their weapons held ready in their hands. I heard their curses in Spanish, Portuguese, and the mongrel speech of the Indies. All the venom in me, all the hatred of Englishman against Spaniard, all the cruel tortures which I and my friends had suffered, surged through my brain like a mighty wave, engulfing the command of the captain and the dishonor of fighting with pirates. My belt was empty and I turned to rob the dead.

"There are two women in the state cabin who have need of your services, Captain Middleton." The person known to the pirates as Count Uldric Huguenin stood at my side offering me a brace of pistols and an unsheathed sword.

I started forward with I know not what cry on my lips, what feeling gripping my heart. Then I stopped stock still, confounded by the command expressed in the face that confronted me.

"Captain Middleton," the tone was one of sharp attention. "You are a soldier, a man schooled to meet dangers unmoved. Let not a woman teach you self-control. You go to fight the mortal enemies of England and to preserve yourself from recapture."

"And you?" I asked, meeting eyes into which I knew that I might gaze a lifetime and read no shadow of fear.

"I go to guard the door of the state cabin where sit two women who go with me when I needs must bid good-night to this world."

A moment we clasped hands, gazed into each other's eyes and only God knows what thoughts, what questions, what promises passed between us, asked and answered, in that brief space of time.

The deck beneath our feet rose up, hurling us apart. The York and the galleon that grappled with her rode so high that for an instant they appeared to leave the water entirely. Then they sank deep, for a space wallowing in the waves. With wild shouts of exultation, the Spaniards swarmed over our side and closed

with the men who waited to receive them. In that space, in which every minute seemed a thousand years I know not what I did, how many of the fighting, struggling, swearing, screeching creatures fell beneath my sword, nor did I feel the wounds they gave me.

It was all a great misty, mazy blur of blackness and blood red, in which the mate and the surgeon alone took definite form. They slashed to the right and the left, slaying all who came within reach of their mighty arms. More than once they came, when I was hard pressed, beating back the foemen who struggled to take my life.

At last we beat the Spaniards back; we forced them over the sides, whirling many into the gulf below before they could even put out their hands and touch their own ship. The pirates raised a hoarse yell, drowned all at once by the shock of the merchant ship as she grappled us aft. Her men sprang over our sides and reached the middle of the deck before the pirates met them with a rush that swept them back like chaff. They sought to regain their own deck, rushing rough-shod over the groaning heaps of wounded and dying, only to be cut down or forced back into the sea. Calling to his men, the mate scaled our bulwarks and leaped upon the Spaniards. I was

following hard on his heels when his voice stopped me.

"The surgeon is down, Captain Middleton," he cried. "And the Spaniards, boarding from the galleon, scale our sides again."

Before the last word passed his lips I and the men who fought around me were back and upon them.

Over our sides we drove them, following even to the galleon's deck. Like cattle we beat them back and down—allowing no quarter—until the last man of them lay dead at our feet. With a hoarse shout of exultation the men who followed me sank down exhausted, unmindful alike of the pools of blood and of the dead men against whom they lay.

The sight that met my eyes when the smoke had cleared away was such as would make a strong man's blood run cold and a timid woman lose her reason. Side by side the three great ships lay, grappled together and tossing at the mercy of the waves and of their flapping, shot-riddled sails. There was not a moving thing in sight. The men who, an hour before, made hell on earth by their impious curses and unholy strife, living and dead alike, lay prone on the blood-soaked decks. Even the wounded had either fainted or slept, and were no longer con-

torted by convulsions or raising their voices in blasphemous imprecations and piteous moans.

The exhaustion passed and we arose and went to search over the prize that we had taken with such a fearful loss of life. We found a king's ransom twice over in gold and in silver, there were bales and bundles of rich cloth of gold and cloth of silver; frails of pearls and other jewels that my pirate followers did not stop to count but of which each took as many as he wished. In the state cabin we came upon six trembling women and two priests blanched with fear. I barricaded the door and rating the men as their Captain would have done, forced them to leave the fear-stricken creatures unharmed and go with me to other parts of the ship. In the reeking hold we found huddled some half an hundred prisoners, black, red, and white,—both men and boys—designed as we all knew to be sold as slaves. I ordered the hatches opened and they came swarming out like a horde of wild men, desperate with fear. When they saw the deck strewn with the lifeless bodies of those who had until recently held them captive they gazed into the faces of the handful of men who now held the ship with something near akin to hope in their eyes.

They were empty-handed and we well armed.

They had been subjected to cruel tortures as we could tell by the wounds on their bodies and the traces of bitter pain in their faces. Like a herd of frightened sheep they stood silently crowded before us, the weak behind the strong.

"Is there not one among you with a tongue in his head, men?" I cried, stepping out from among the pirates. "Some of you have the look of Englishmen."

"There are many of us who speak the English tongue and some who claim England as our home, sir," one of them, a small man with a keen face and large pensive, dark eyes, said, making his way to the front. "Do we stand before the Captain of that ship?" he asked, pointing to the York upon which, where they all could see, fluttered a black flag.

I shook my head and pointed to the mate who had but just leaped from the merchantman to his own deck. "No, friend," I answered. "I was, as you yourselves, rescued from the hands of Spaniards by those whom the world calls pirates. Their captain is Thomas Hawkins, of whom some of you may have heard."

"He puts to death no Englishman," a tall young fellow, with a countenance that was neither mean nor villainous despite its scars and dirt, exclaimed stepping forward boldly.

"There has been hard fighting, sir, and mayhap men will be needed to take these prizes in. I would sail under Captain Thomas Hawkins in any capacity that he may choose. Aye, verily, and as long as he will permit me, so that he goes against the Spaniard."

"Aye, aye," his fellows cried, signifying their willingness to follow his lead.

The mate coming to the galleon's deck, I told him of their words, and he made short work of appointing them to the task of throwing into the sea the dead bodies that covered the planks. This done, the treasure secured on board the York, and the prisoners set at tasks of repairing the three ships, the pirates bethought themselves of the women and the priests whom I had shut within the state cabin. They had lost many comrades and their Captain lay sore wounded, but in all they had taken two gallant prizes and of those who had fought against them there was not one left on either of the three ships; living and dead alike had been cast into the sea. All were in high good humor; they had found wine in plenty and rich food with which they would soon debauch themselves, fine clothes to deck their bodies, treasures to game with, and now they would have prisoners, priests and women, of whom to make sport.

With wild shouts of exultation and filthy oaths, the pirates rushed forward to burst in the cabin and begin their merriment. The mate turned them back, rating them like dogs, holding his point against them and daring them to come against him, braving the crowd of savage villains until he at last had his way. Then choosing three to his liking he went below and led out the cowering women and priests. He forced them on to the poop and there the men sat themselves down and began dicing for the women.

They were all Spaniards and none of a great beauty; but they were women. I thought of the fate that awaited them and my heart turned sick from very hatred of men and their brutish passions. I remembered the one who had guarded the two helpless women, who now sat in the cabin of the York, and, through all the terrible hours since they had been brought out of Augustine, had by a keen wit, snatched safety for them out of this same ruin and held it by a steadfast courage that surpassed the imaginings of men. My mind was busied with such thoughts when there walked in among us the one about whom they were most concerned.

"Master Mate," my lord cried, stopping and looking about him, his lips curled in fine scorn, his eyes flashing, "who is that covey of

frightened doves and for what does your hell-litter dice?" In his tone and bearing, as he stood there amongst them—one man among a hundred—there was so much of haughtiness and courage, that the men left off their gaming and stared at him askance.

"They dice for possession of those women, taken from the state cabin of this galleon, my lord," the mate answered.

"They shall not have them, sir," my lord cried, facing him, his hand on his sword. "That I'll swear."

"My lord," the mate cried, springing to his feet—his unsheathed blade in his hand and an expression on his handsome face that was ugly to look upon—"the captain of the York lies in his cabin wounded unto death and there is none on board who dares gainsay my orders." At his words, the other pirates sprang up and were at his back. "I say—"

"I care not what you are or what you say," my lord flung back at him, departing not one hair's-width from the spot on which he stood. I clutched the sword that had rested idle against my knees and swore in my heart that he should not die alone. "I stand under thy challenge for a wager, Master Mate, as thou well knowest," he cried in his high, sweet voice in which there was now the ring of passion. "Had I

thought it out an hundred years, I could not have hit upon a forfeit that would please me so well as does yon half dozen shrinking women."

"What, ho, wouldst have all six?" shouted one man wearing pierced pezos of gold in his ears, and more villainous looking than the rest. "'Ods blood! boy, wouldst have a harem, thou prince of fighting cocks?"

"Yea, it suits my humor to found a harem on your pirate island. I would be the Grand Turk of your New World and live at mine ease surrounded by such sweet loves. An I beat you at swords, Sir Giant, I will claim as my own that group of women and the two fathers —Aye, verily, I must have the priests to confess me; for though I be the Grand Turk of the New World I would have my soul prayed into the next. I stand under your challenge, Master Mate; you threw down the gauntlet, now I take it up, naming my forfeit. If I beat you at swords the women and the priests are mine to do with as I will."

"If you beat me at swords," the mate cried fiercely, "you may claim the women to do with as you will; but the priests—"

"Give him the fathers, mate, if it will make him die easier," the fellow wearing the pierced pezos cried, with a string of unclean oaths.

"Let him have his whim and we will see what metal it will put into his braggart's arm that he meets not death at your sword point. Give him his will, it will make you to spit him all the better."

"I saw him beat down the Captain's blade and send it rattling against the stones in the streets of Augustine," cried a pirate whose brawny shoulders were covered by what remained of a red velvet jerkin. And I saw that there would be a side for as well as one against my lord.

"Aye, but ye will not see him beat down the mate's blade, devil," the first man exclaimed, while other of his fellows ran for sand with which to strew the blood smeared deck. Then the ring was formed.

MY lord stripped off his coat and waistcoat, and never before or since have I seen aught in man's attire as beautiful as was the young Count Uldric Huguenin as he then appeared in his spotless shirt with his ruffles and neckcloth of fine lace. A moment he stood on guard, his chin held high, his red lips curled in a smile, his eyes like twin stars, waiting the onslaught of the young giant who faced him. The attack of the mate was of a fierce intensity that took my breath; by brute force he sought to bear down and overwhelm his antagonist. My lord met his strokes by quick changes of position that brought into play all the powers of the mind, eye and wrist and proved his ability to read and interpret in the eye of his enemy his intent before his wrist had power to execute. I handle a blade that won me high respect both among roisterers and gentlemen in England, and I knew that I was justly rated the best swordsman in Carolina, but I felt that should I ever stand face to

face with either of the men who fought before me I would meet my match.

The mate had the longer reach and often the young court gallant was hard pressed. Once, after a circular parry, I sucked in my breath and felt my heart strings like to snap, for I thought the pirate's blade had caught him in the sword arm, but my lord proved too quick for him. The pirates who sat on my side of the circle cheered softly.

An instant, my lord gave him breathing space. Then they were at it again, the mate even more furiously. I soon saw that my lord could tire him out and I watched with beating heart his heavy breathing and the streams of sweat that flowed freely over his great body. He tried one attack after another and my lord was much put to it to defend himself. Then the mate came upon him with a move that made me grit my teeth and clench my hands until the nails sank deep into the flesh; it was a volte coupe, feinting in prime and thrusting in seconde. My lord parried, and with a swift movement of his lithe, beautiful body, held the point of his blade over the giant's heart. The pirates on my side of the circle cheered lustily and the others joined with them. The mate knew their meaning and after a moment's glaring into the eyes of the man who had spared

him, slipped his sword into its scabbard and turned cursing away.

My lord, still smiling, began leisurely to replace his garments, unheedful alike of the pirates' cheers and their words of commendation.

"Have ye seen him beat down thy mate's blade, bully?" the pirate with the velvet jerkin exclaimed to his fellow with gold pezos in his ears.

"'Twas but trickery," he of the pezos replied growling. "Had the mate so willed it he could have spitted the young boasting devil ten times over."

"Ye lie in your throat, ye whelp," the first pirate cried, whipping out his knife and making for him of the gold earrings.

They grappled and there arose a mighty confusion in which all joined, each man fighting and howling out the name of his favorite. Some cried for the mate, others for the count, as they laid about them with their weapons. The mate sprang among them and took a hand in the fray. He seized him of the gold pezos and dragging him out of the clutches of the fellow who wore the jerkin, used him as a ram, hurling him against the mass of the other fighters. He rated them as hounds and poured out such

a stream of villainous, curdling oaths as it has never been my fate to hear surpassed.

"Do you lack an assistant, Master Mate?" my lord cried, gaily. "I had but just warmed to the fight when you put aside your blade and would be right blithe to cut the heart out of some few of your noisy devils."

Here he put out his foot and tripping the pirate with the pezos earrings, sent him sprawling to the deck. For the brute had regained his feet, and with drawn knife, had made a mad rush for the mate. There was a shout of laughter; the men left off their fighting, and good humor was restored.

"My forfeit," said my lord, turning and doffing his hat to the women and the priests who had been mute and trembling witnesses to these two mad scenes.

"Aye, let the young gallant have his forfeit," shouted a brawny savage, snatching off the only covering that he wore above his waist —a handkerchief of delicately embroidered silk —and waving it wildly above his head. "Let him have his forfeit, I say, won in fair fight and with honest sword. Give the young lordling his coop of hens. By 'r larkin, I'll swear there's not one among them with as pretty a face or as handsome a form as his own."

"Aye, let him have them; let him take his harem," they all cried to a man; even the ruffian with the pezos joined in the lusty shouts of, "Fairly won," "With honest sword."

The mate growled out his assent and my lord clapping on his hat strode across the deck to take possession of his winnings.

"My lord," the savage of the silk handkerchief cried, "had I a wench with legs of but half so handsome a shape as thine own I'd not sell her for a thousand pezos in gold."

"Had you such a one, villain," my lord replied, turning, and the smile on his lips and the color in his cheeks remained unchanged, "I would have her of you did she cost the whole of my fortune and I had to cut your black heart out to boot. And when I got her I would thrust this deep into her tender bosom," he said, drawing from his belt a keen dagger with jewels flashing in its hilt. "For I will have no rival to my beauty, not even a woman."

The pirates cheered this bragging speech loud and long, for they loved right well the haughtiness of his bearing and the mad words and curses that he hurled at them, defying the whole ship's crew. I turned my gaze on the mate that I might see in what sort he held this great show of favor from his pirates. I met his eyes;—it was plain to see he had been regarding

me narrowly. I read lurking in their depths an expression—the dawn of a suspicion in some sort—that I was not soon to forget. Knowing that I had caught him unawares he turned to my lord, exclaiming:

"What is your will concerning the two fat hypocrites and your last flock of hens, my lord?"

"To put them in their coop, Master Mate, where I can know them safe and coddle them to my heart's content," he answered, ogling the captive females in the manner which I'll warrant he had learned of the Grand Monarque himself.

"Captain Hawkins lies in his cabin raving like a madman and the surgeon is scarce better," the mate said, having ordered his pirates about their business, when we three were left alone on the poop deck with the prisoners. "We have three ships and hardly men enough to man one—I know not how our crew placed on board the merchantman at Augustine passed out of this life, but they had all been murdered or cast living into the sea. It is my purpose to put this galleon into your hands as its captain, Captain Middleton," he said, turning to me.

"And my lord?" I exclaimed, remembering the look that I had caught lurking in his eyes.

I stared at him, then my gaze traveled past him to my lord's face. It was blankly indifferent, he felt no interest in the subject and I realized that I must needs learn self-control of a woman.

"I will appoint my lord as my own mate, if he will so serve," he replied, and he did not strive to keep out of his voice the suspicion that was in his eyes.

"That will I, Sir Pirate, and right blithe to do it," my lord cried, his face flushing and his eyes on fire.

"And my mate?" I questioned, hoping to cover up the suspicion which my first words had raised. "You will doubtless appoint me as able an assistant."

"Not so handsome a one, Captain Middleton," the pirate answered, smiling grimly. "Cayman, we call him because of his cavernous mouth and the great distance that he can fling open his huge jaws. He is the devil who so admireth the fine shape of your lordship's legs."

"Give him me, Master Mate, for I do love all who admire my beauty with a love that passes the understanding of most men. Make me a captain that he may serve my mate. I would change places with Captain Middleton and I'll warrant that we'd sail this galleon most

gaily into port, my mate and I. Make me her captain, Sir Pirate."

"No, my lord," the mate replied, regarding him with such an alertness as I had seen gleam in the eyes of a snake when it was about to strike. "The command of a pirate's prize is not a domain suited to your talent. We have need of your services on board the York. Its captain is mad from fever and may need your handsome face and soft hands—I'll warrant, my lord, that your hands are as soft as they are white—to soothe his ravings. If you had but the training, you'd make a most skilful nurse I doubt not, my lord. As skilful as your sister is at swordplay, mayhap. I have travelled much in France and have some few friends at court from whom I have heard much of your lordship's sister, Mistress Antoinette Huguenin."

He leaned forward gazing keenly into my lord's eyes. If he expected to gain aught from either those eyes or from that face he got it not. The eyes that met his were like great dark pools, sunlit and sparkling. The color in the face neither lessened nor increased, nor was there the slightest movement of a muscle.

"Then," said my lord, "you marvel not that I want near me those who love well my

handsome face and fine shape. 'Tis court gossip about Mistress Antoinette, and her love of admiration. I would be your Cayman's captain, Master Pirate, and hear him praise my beauty."

"That cannot be, my lord," the mate replied, and though I saw he was baffled, I saw also by the gleam in his eye that he had not given up. "This galleon is a great prize and has need of an older head to sail her."

"But the merchantman; who commands the merchantman?" my lord persisted.

"She was badly disabled in the fight, my lord, and when we have stripped her we will leave her in flames. Would you bestow your two sleek Jesuits under her hatches?"

"Nay, nay, Master Mate," he cried, laughing in high good humor. "I must keep the fathers for the salvation of my soul. Though I be the Grand Turk of your continent, I would not forego the joys of the life to come. I will take the fathers and the rest of my cattle with me on board the York. I will be your mate, Sir Pirate, do good service and beat my men roundly if they work not to my liking; but there will be hours of ease, and I must have my sweet loves with me."

He went gaily over to the group of prisoners and later, as I busied myself in the duties of

the position assigned me, I saw him enjoying his sport—chucking the women under their chins, kissing them, pinching their cheeks, chasing the more timid here and there about the poop deck in his efforts to embrace them, touching the fathers with the point of his sword, flashing it before their eyes, and swearing like any trooper if they started back or so much as winked their eyes because of its too near approach to their noses.

Once when I heard his peals of joyous laughter joined in by cries and shouts from the pirates, I turned and saw that he made the fattest of the friars dance a merry jig, forcing him to it by blows from the flat of his sword, and by jeering words and strange curses. Now this way, now that, the panting father footed it; with skirts held high he went skipping through all the whirls and turnings, hopping nimbly over the sword when my lord presented it. And I'll warrant the wildest young gallant of King Louis' court could not have laughed louder or urged on the priests with more taunting words than did this young lordling. I looked on wonderingly and joined with my pirate crew in their cheers at his folly.

Since I had waked and found myself out of that iron cage at Augustine, I had seen many strange and curious things, and had many ex-

periences that no man in his senses could have conjured up in his brain. In my not too long life I had learned many lessons and was like to be taught many more, but I knew that I would never have such another teacher as him who had brought the manners and dress of the French court amongst the buccaneers of America. For steadfast courage, with every breath he drew he gave a proof that grew constantly greater; for his faithfulness to his friends I had but to call to mind my own rescue and that of the women who sat on board the York; for his sympathy for mankind, even those of the race who had brought him to this plight, the group of helpless creatures whom he had saved from a fate worse than death evidenced; for folly and mad daring, and all that beseemed a wild roisterer—I turned away, shrugging the shoulders of my understanding. The inconsistency of it all passed my powers of comprehension.

When next I saw my lord, he was forcing his playthings over my bulwarks and to the deck of the York. Some he urged with kisses and some by less gentle means. Fanciful oaths flowed from his smiling lips and he shouted boastingly to the mate who stood on the quarter-deck of the pirate. Seeing me he exclaimed:

"I drive my cattle from your deck, Captain

Middleton. Though they know that they go to safety and the bliss of my caresses they are loath to quit your ship. They are as like all other women for contrariness as are black-eyed peas one to another."

"You could scarce expect them to hasten fast, my lord," I made answer, walking quite up to where he stood, "when you urge them on with your kisses.

"My kisses!" he cried. "Yea, but one refused my kisses. That black-eyed wench with the trim waist, she outwomans them all for perverseness. She will have none of my kisses. I esteem her the more for her taste, for by my faith were I another and had my will I'd not accept my kisses."

The smile had left his lips and his eyes were pensive to sadness. We stood quite alone. He laid his hand on the bulwark about to follow his prisoners.

"There be those among your audience, my lord, who would be blithe to kiss the dust beneath your feet," I told him, and I think my voice trembled for a cruel hand seemed griping my heart because I thought he doubted the part he played and how it appeared to others.

He threw up his head with a gay laugh; then he scaled the bulwarks and turned back facing me.

"I sought to teach you a lesson this morning on the quarter-deck and found you but a dull pupil, Captain Middleton," he exclaimed, so loud that the mate must needs hear. "Have a care, sir, how you cross my purpose, or I will lesson you as you saw me do the mate. When that time comes I will not spare you, that I'll warrant."

IT was near nightfall when our dead, having been buried in the sea and our grappling irons cast loose, we set sail for the pirates' stronghold. From out the merchantman there crept a thin white smoke that increased both in volume and blackness as the breadth of darkening waters between us widened swiftly. From my own deck I watched the fire spread. First a yellow flickering flame that seemed hardly of the bigness of a man's hand; then it came again and another with it; then another and another, until they mounted up so fast and fiercely that I ceased to count. From gold they changed to blood-red, shot high in the air and caught the rigging. Like some terrible living monster they leaped up, spreading over the sails, and from the topmast streamed up a fierce tongue towards the black heavens.

We sailed under a heaven, moon-lit and star-lit, but over that burning ship there was naught but blackness. From stem to stern, from

water's edge to the top of her crumbling spars she was a glowing mass of red, orange, and gold. As she drifted, or as at times the breeze changed, the smoke enveloped her and she appeared a ship all rose-colored from the rays of a rising sun. Then she veered again and seemed sailing down toward us like some horrible monster, her hull and spars dead-black and her sails and streamers blood-red. The smoke came down and melting into the sea hid her shape, and the glare of the flames that devoured her was the yawning mouth of hell from which we fled. We left her far behind and when she seemed but a bright glow on that line where sky and sea flow together I left off watching and heaved a great sigh of relief that there had been no human creatures left to perish on her. I knew to whose courage it was due that such was the case and in the depths of my heart I thanked God that he had sent me a captive among Indians, left me a prisoner in Augustine, to be hung in their iron cage and rescued by pirates since through these I had come to know the greatness of one loyal human heart, whose true nobleness there were not words in any language great enough to describe.

The sun rose clear and the gleaming sea sprang up in little waves as though to meet in very gladness the cool breeze that kissed its

face. I walked the deck of that galleon, its captain; the crew who served under my orders were pirates and the black flag fluttered over her poop atop of St. George's ensign. My order was to follow the York close and it suited well the inclination of my heart. I let not the ribbon of changing water grow too wide between us and my eyes were ever busy with her deck. I saw him whose bright clothes made him resemble more than aught else some brilliantly colored butterfly, come on to the poop deck with two more soberly clad figures and my heart sang. A night had passed, another day had come, and he still held his power over the savages who surrounded him. I put my glasses to my eyes to spy upon the two who had come upon the deck with him.

"The young fighting-cock is on deck again, sir," came the voice of the pirate who served as my mate, and I remembered that other pirate and the suspicion in his eyes when I had last seen him gaze into my lord's face.

"I look at the point of land to the sou'east," I answered and handed him my glasses and roughly bade him tell me if he knew its form.

"You have monstrous fine eyes, Captain," he exclaimed when he had told me what land it was and looked through my glasses the second time. "I saw not the faintest glimmer of

land when you first spoke and even now without the glass it seems but the shadow of a cloud."

"It was plainly visible," I told him, though in truth I had not the faintest suspicion of its existence until the glasses that I destined for quite another purpose flashed it into view. "I only use the glasses to draw it nearer."

I took them from his hand as the man on the lookout gave the cry that told all on board that land was sighted. There would be no tales carried of my action on this day, thank God! I put my glasses to my eyes and again turning them towards the point that was rapidly growing up from the sea focused them on the faces at no greater distance than the deck of the pirate ship. I was not surprised at the features that they brought to me, although I remembered well the words of Count Huguenin at our first meeting on that same poop deck: "My aunt you have never seen, Captain Middleton, and her black serving woman who also you are yet to set eyes upon for the first time."

I turned about and with threats and curses that well befitted the part I played ordered my men back to their work. Then with a smile in my heart, though I dare not wear it on my face, I went contentedly to my duties as captain of the pirates' prize.

"The York has the devil of a mate," I heard one pirate exclaim to another. My back was towards the ship of which they talked but I would not turn. "Look at the young lordling now."

"Aye, and what is he about?" his fellow questioned. "He climbs like a cat."

"Cat?" the first man sneered. "As a devil say I. He climbs as he fights and does all else I'll warrant, the young imp. But why climbs he in the rigging?"

"'Tis his humor, fool," the other answered. "Naught else could make him stir hand or foot or open or shut his red lips."

Then I turned and seeing them loitering swore at them fiercely.

"I did but watch the young lord, Captain," replied the younger of the two, motioning towards the pirate craft. He was a Frenchman about whose broken head was swathed a breadth torn from a woman's delicately wrought petticoat. "My father is a poor man and I was brought up in the country and never saw a court gallant until this one. You have been at court, sir, and mayhap have seen the English king. Are all his gallants as beautiful as our count, and as ready to fight?"

I shook my head, smiling at the knave's pronoun of possession. "I have seen many court

gallants," I told him, "but not one to compare with your young French count. What does he, sitting in the rigging?"

Before he could reply I was answered by the notes of a rollicking song sung by a rich voice in which there was both sweetness and strength. Though I could distinguish few of its words the air was so filled with the bragging swagger of a dare-devil roisterer that I joined in the loud laughter of my crew and when it finished cheered with them in applause. We waited in a silence broken only by the wash of the waves as our ship cut her way through the sparkling water. Then the voice of the pirate mate—of him who served as captain—cried out:

"Sing another, my lord. It is long since I have heard a court ditty and never one sung in a voice like your own. Give us another, my lord."

"Aye, aye!" shouted the crew of the pirate. "Aye, aye!" the men on the galleon answered.

He sang again, a ballad in which there was all of light and love and laughter. And the men cheered bravely at the sound of its English words. His humor changed and there floated out to us as soft as the breathings of a flower.

"'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not

want. He maketh me, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,—' "

Brawny, sunburnt, scarred men listened, and through the blood-red haze of a thousand crimes the faces and scenes of their innocent childhood came as a softening memory. It carried me back to England. Again I was a child at my mother's knee, looking up into her tender eyes with all the love and trust that were in my childish heart; then I was a lad, a boy grown out of that innocence, at school with other boys —now at play in sunny courts, now droning lessons over much scarred tables, now sitting in the solemn dusk of the chapel forced to listen to the priest and wishing to be out on the river or on the greensward; again the scene changed and I stared round-eyed at the long-visaged, solemnly dressed soldiers that followed him at whose bidding the head of an English king rolled in the dust. I had been a small boy in those days but the singing of those words brought it back as though it had all happened yesterday.

Then it took me back to my life at court, as wild as any of the reckless swaggerers about me. I had my fling with the wildest roisterers of my breeding and quality and enjoyed it right well. The death of that gentle-faced mother snapped the cord that bound me to the old world

and, along with other swaggerers, I cast my lot in the new. It was a rare picture, my coming to the beautiful and savage new world. I saw the great rivers, the harbors and its cluster of small houses; beyond them all was forest, forest, forest, with great moss-draped trees, strange flowers, strange birds, strange animals, and stranger people. I saw my house, my neighbor, my neighbor's house in which there always played a little maid with great black, hawk eyes—a child whom, as I sat and watched her, I often questioned was she more human or elfin? Then followed my later vision of her and the trust she had laid upon me. The adventures that followed, the tortures, the coming of him whose voice was my light and my deliverance and who—thinking of all that I had seen him do and heard him say—again in my heart I questioned was he human or elfin in spirit?

"'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou—'"

"He will make women of us all if he keeps this up," I heard the voice of my gunner say, and he was reproved by his fellows into silence.

But they had their trouble for their pains. My lord had had his fill of psalm singing, and before the last word had formed an echo I heard him shouting his commands to that half-

witted kitchen boy who had formed his especial body-guard since his coming aboard the ship, in a tone in which there was nothing softer than haughty passion.

We saw the man he threatened clamber hastily up the rigging to him, stretch out a bare arm—there was a flash.

"My lord has lost his humor for singing and would smoke his roll of tobacco swinging in the rigging," one of my pirates remarked as he drew the spider's tooth from his own tobacco pouch and leisurely cleaning his pipe, called to his fellows to leave off their staring and come back to their seats in the shade to begin again the two occupations that I never knew to cease to amuse them or any other man who had ever shipped before the mast—gaming and smoking.

We sailed past that land sighted at sunrise—a tiny island whose one hill shone under the noonday sun like a peak of purest gold. Then we came to many others both great and small but we stopped not, for Spanish sails often came that way and we were not manned for fighting, but hastened to make our home port where the prize could be divided, the wounded tended and the damage made by our own and Spanish shots repaired.

At sunset we came in sight of two sails, a galleon near as great as the one on which I

stood and a caravel. They belonged to the plate fleet of the Indies, that fleet whose yearly sailing was most anxiously looked forward to both by the king of Spain and the buccaneers of America. I saw the eyes of the pirates glisten with greed, and heard deep swearing at the chance that had lost them their comrades on board the merchantman and put them in such a sorry plight that they dared not give such prizes battle but must skulk into a protecting channel and thus make their own escape.

The night passed as cloudless and beautiful as the day and almost as bright. In a mistless dawn I looked out and beheld so many islands that I could not have numbered them on the fingers of one hand; some near and some far, like clouds they floated on the bosom of a blood-red sea. The water changed to pure gold, then to amethyst, shot with brightest blue and palest green. The gay colors of the court butterfly showed on the deck of the pirate and my heart laughed with the sunlit waves.

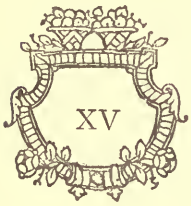
We passed near land but saw no living thing save the scarlet and green birds in the trees and the wild creatures that lay on the beach or fed on the hillsides. Then, as we came from out a little strait between two islands there stretched before us an indented line of verdure.

From the throats of all on board the pirate and the galleon there went up a lusty shout. I knew we had sighted our haven,—that island upon which the great Genoese was the first to look and by this warrant claim for his ungrateful countrymen the possession of the vast riches and boundless country of the New World.

There are no colors, no words bright enough to paint the beauties of that Indian island and the waters through which we sailed. Flying fish glided by us, bonitos and albicores played around the bows, dolphins gleamed in our wake, often sharks and once a whale, emerald-colored and huge, kept us company. The beach was a silver strand fringed with evergreen, drooping mangroves, and long shrouding avenues of the dark green leaves of the stately manchineel, beautiful but noxious, the white wood, the forest trees that grew farther inland, knotted and bound together with luxuriant festoons of evergreen creepers that connected them in one vast network of leaves and branches.

We had glimpses of numerous monkeys swinging and climbing in the tree-tops, and flocks of birds, bright colored and clamorous. Once we passed on the beach a huge turtle making its ponderous way back to the water,

while still farther on, down the same stretch of sand some little animals that I could not name frolicked in the sunlight, now in now out of the water.



AT the entrance of the bay on which was situated the buccaneers' fastness, were two islands extending from east to west. The one toward the east my mate told me was called Watch Isle, because of the high hill in the middle on which they had built a watch-house; the one to the west was Pigeon Island, on account of the great number of these birds that inhabited it. Between these two islands ran a long and swift channel of fresh water, the only entrance to the harbor, as I afterwards proved, that was of sufficient depth to allow of the passage of any besides the smallest boats. On Pigeon Island loomed a grim castle, the purpose of which I needed no telling, and under whose guns, a vessel sailing in or out, was forced by great sand-banks.

That our passage into the harbor was noticed I could tell from the numerous heads that peered down upon us from the castle; that, seeing the captured galleon, they rated the enter-

prise successful was proved by the loud cheers they sent after us.

"I thought ye would go to heaven this trip, devil," a great voice bellowed.

"Give me hell," was the blasphemous reply of the old pirate, who sailed as my ship-master and who in his young days had served as soldier under Turenne in the Fronde war. "'Tis a merrier place than heaven and at the entrance I'll stand until I give Tom Hawkins a salute of thirteen guns."

"Has he gone there, then?" another savage yelled.

"No, ye land rogue," was shouted back from aboard the York. "But when he does he will take thee with him to carry his crutch, for the new surgeon has sawed off his leg."

From the swiftly moving current of the strait we passed into a clear green lake, the harbor of the pirates' stronghold. It was itself a stronghold, by reason of the stretches of gleaming sand that winded here and there like the coils of a great serpent, now out, now under the water. Sea birds skimmed upon the placid surface, and red flamingoes stalked around the sandy shoals, while great alligators wallowed on the muddy banks and snowy pelicans held their torpid councils in solemn stupidity.

From the water's edge sloped green undulat-

ing fields of maize and tobacco, and stretches of great trees vine wreathed and laden with gorgeous colored blossoms above whose tops waved feathery palms, their heavy fruit glistening like polished gold. Farther inland a range of mountains rose precipitously, their peaks snow-capped and dazzling white.

On the farther side of the lake from the channel and somewhat to the east was the city, a cluster of about two hundred not too tall houses, defended at the rear by tall palisades banked with earth, and on the water front by a great stone fort from whose tower floated two great flags. One showed the lilies of France while the other was of the same sombre hue as that which waved above my ship.

Heading now this way, now that, to avoid the dangers of the sand-banks, we came at last to anchor and with such of my crew as had been named by the pirate who acted as captain of the York, I went ashore in our long boat. The people who swarmed down to meet us looked a savage crowd in their motley dress. The women—of whom there was a small sprinkling—were as gaudy as the birds that we had seen in the forest robed in silks and velvets whose richness ill accorded with their sunburnt faces and their ungentle ways. The huge beards of the men with their long hair falling

wildly over their shoulders, increased the ferocity of their appearance in their blood-stained shirts, short breeches, bare legs and leathern sandals. These fierce creatures I knew to be the hunters of the colony, from the knife case of cayman skin and the roll of mosquito net that hung from their waists. The planters, like the women, were bedecked in all the splendors rummaged from the Spanish cabins, while the few sea-rovers among them combined rich borrowings with their rough garments in a manner most amazing. One heathen who ran down to assist at our landing, and whose great body was bare to his waist, wore a laced sword-belt of great richness; atop his shock of tangled hair he wore a broad velvet hat heavily plumed, while over the rough unclean shirt of another flowed a steinkirk of lace as rich as that worn by my lord.

"You are a stranger, sir, yet you come among us with a bold step," a stout man said to me as I left the boat. His cheeks were as plump as pulpit cushions and under his chin there were great rolls of fat. He was dressed in crimson damask; a red feather flaunted in his cocked hat; on his breast blazed a diamond cross, that hung on a thick gold chain wound around his neck. He rested on an unsheathed sword, and had two pairs of pistols hanging pirate-fashion

in a silk sling over his shoulders. I walked into the crowd at the head of my pirate crew, myself as savage looking as any among them, I'll warrant, and replied to his questionable salutation.

"I am an Englishman, your Honor," I said, for I judged him to be the Governor by the respectful bearing of those who stood around him as well as the dignity of his manner and the richness of his dress. "I am a citizen of Charleston, in the province of Carolina, and was rescued by your friends from the iron cage of Augustine."

"He fought like the devil with us against the Spaniards, your Honor," the gunner of my crew cried, when I had ceased to speak. "They pressed us hard but we sent the last man to hell and sailed away,—"

He went on giving details of the fight and the amount of treasure captured, but my eyes and ears were so busy on another errand that I did not attend. The two long boats of the pirate ship were coming ashore. They were heavily laden with human freight and came but slowly. In the bottom of the one in which stood the mate, crouched the fat priests and the two old Spanish women prisoners, while in the other sat the four young women with my lord's English aunt and her black serving woman. My lord stood in the bow and those

on the shore gazed at him in wonder as they listened to the account of his adventures and of his daring and bravery as told by the gunner of the galleon.

"Did you not learn his name, Captain Middleton?" the Governor asked, "The name of this young gallant of King Louis' court to whom you owe your rescue, and who according to your crew had the bravery of Montbars, the Exterminator, even if he has not Montbars' hatred for the Spaniards?"

"I know only that which is known to all who sailed with him, your Honor," I replied. "To us all he is known—"

The boats grated on the sand, and my lord springing out strode up the bank ahead of the mate.

"Monsieur D'Oyeron," he cried, his hat in his hand and sweeping him of the red damask a gallant bow, "though you remember me not I stood at your side and played with the lace of your sword belt when you came with the commissioners of your company praying the king to sanction your governor's warrant."

"My lord," the Governor cried, with all deference, backing before him and bowing low, "though I remember not your face I cannot doubt your lordship's word."

"Yet I was of that same gay company, your

Honor," my lord assured him. "And I saw that the King showed you small favor until Madam de Montespan urged him, 'Sign the warrant and send them away, Sire,' she said. 'I would see you play at swords with the pretty youth.' I was that pretty youth, your Honor, and I stood at your side as you knelt to receive your warrant from the hands of the Grand Monarque."

"Those were her very words, my lord," the Governor cried, and I saw the deference in his manner increase, while the people crowded about him, trod on each other's heels, and craned their necks, that they might the better view one who had stood so near a king. "And I remember the gallant figure you cut and your sword with its jeweled hilt, which they said the king had given you. That is four years gone, my lord, and you looked a slender youth indeed. Though I recall all else I do not remember that I learned your lordship's name."

"My name," my lord answered, looking the Governor squarely in the eyes, "is Uldric Huguenin."

"My lord," the Governor cried, fiercely, starting back, his sword half raised, "your father is my bitterest enemy."

"For that reason I told you my name," my

lord replied, meeting his gaze of hatred with calm eyes.

"You are daring, sir," the pirate ruler cried, glaring at him and fingering the hilt of the dagger that hung at his belt.

My lord stood alone. The Governor's people had fallen back with their ruler and I with the mate and the others of our crew who had leaped ashore, held the position at one side that we had first taken.

"That a son inherits his mother's spirit is no new creed, your Honor," my lord replied, and there was a sneer in his voice that he took not the trouble to disguise.

"She lost much and died of a broken heart," the Governor snarled, his face working in rage.

"She gained the love of a noble gentleman and died a happy woman," my lord answered him.

"He turned her from her duty to her church and her parents and sent her soul to burn in hell. For it, I have sworn to cut out his heretic heart," he raged.

"His son stands before you, your Honor," my lord replied with mock deference, as he unsheathed his blade.

"You dare me, you dog?" the buccaneer cried. His voice was a bellow of rage, his face was purple-red and his lips were flecked

with foam, as he rushed forward with uplifted sword.

I sprang towards my lord, but the pirate giant was ahead of me.

He received the onsault of the Governor and with his cutlass sent his sword rattling in the dust.

"Alexandre Bras de Fer?" the infuriated ruler yelled.

"Yes, your Honor," the mate answered angrily, holding his ground against the rush that threatened him. "Had I not done it you would have fared much worse at the hands of the young count. He would have spitted you as sure as the world turns and would have fought every man of your following without once crying quarter."

"He shall have no quarter," the Governor cried, with a stream of filthy oaths. "Nor shall any who defend him, traitor! Your weapons, men!" he shouted, grown a very madman from rage. "Flay the boasting dastard alive and spare not one who lifts his hand against you!"

There was a sullen mutter, the suppressed roar of a lion before it springs. The mate, my lord, and I, we three, stood shoulder to shoulder and the men who had sailed with us pressed hard against our heels. Two score we

faced two hundred. Then I saw the two fathers gird up their skirts and stepping out from amongst the group of cowering women, enter the ranks of those who, weapons in hand, stood ready to murder us or drive us back into the sea.

"Look, look, look! my lord," cried the mate, lifting his giant arm and pointing to the priests. "See the two cringing hypocrites whom you won from death in the sea by your good sword, and whom you would not have me leave under hatches on our burning merchantman! They know you their deliverer, yet see how they have turned against you because you are a heretic and on the side they think the weaker. Come on! brothers, come on!" he shouted, beckoning to certain men who had left those that pressed about the Governor, and seemed about to cross the line. "There are heretics among planters and hunters as well as sea-rovers—who have heard of a certain bloody St. Bartholomew's Day. Aye, verily, many of you stand here to-day, driven from your homes and your fortunes wrecked, on account of that Catholic love-feast. Come on! all of you. Show your colors, since his Honor, your Governor, has sworn to have the lives of all heretics."

"You lie, you ranting villain," cried the

Governor, still raging, though he seemed not so wild to rush on us since he saw the increase in our ranks and the lessening of his own. "I am no papist as all know, for I believe not in God and hate all priests. It is the young game-cock that ye brought with ye. His father is mine own accursed enemy and I will have his blood."

"What has his father done, that fearing to face him you would murder his son, when he stands in your own city, one man against one thousand?" the mate demanded, scowling at him.

"He seduced the girl I would have married, curse him," the governor replied, grinding his teeth in a very transport of baffled rage.

"I beg that you touch not my mother's good name, Monsieur D'Oyeron," the young count said haughtily, stepping out from between the mate and me. "If you do so, I will have your heart's blood were you King Louis himself. Gentlemen," he said, bowing to both those who stood around him and to those who faced him, and I'll warrant there were many among them that had never before been so addressed, "my mother and father were lovers when they were children, but because he was a heretic they would not give her to him. When they could not force her to wed with the man whom you

have heard make his blasphemous boast of unbelief, they shut her up in a convent and would have made a nun of her had not my father stolen her out and fled with her to England. There he married her and would have taken her to Virginia, but by force of circumstance he was landed here, and lived for near four years among the buccaneers of Hispaniola."

"What is your name, my lord?" asked an old man, whom I judged a Dutchman, and who wore the dress of a hunter, stepping from out the governor's faction, when my lord had ceased to speak.

"Uldric Huguenin," my lord replied courteously. "Hast ever heard it before?"

"Yea," he exclaimed. "I knew your father and your mother when they came to this island, my lord, and I will not fight against their son even for the Governor. There be few Protestants in this land or in any other who have not heard the name of Huguenin, or known it worn by aught but valiant men."

"I thank you, sir," my lord said, baring his head to him. "At another time I would talk with you further."

Then he turned again towards the Governor.

"Monsieur D'Oyeron," he said in all courtesy, "when but a stripling I wielded a sword that King Louis himself did not scorn to cross,

as you well know. Since then my wrist has not grown stiff, and as I stand the younger and somewhat the sprightlier man, Monsieur, I would have them bind my left hand behind my back, that you may have fair play. There lies my challenge, Monsieur!" and he flung his glove at the Governor's feet.

"Boom!" went the great gun of the castle, and we left off staring at the two men before us, and turned to find a reason for the sound. A great ship was sailing past the fortress and into the lake.

"We will have no fight to-day, my lord," the mate said, after we had stood for some minutes staring at the approaching sails. "Unless my eyes deceive me that is the English armed packet Swallow with Sir Henry Morgan, who comes to revisit his stronghold. He acts the Governor of Jamaica in the stead of my lord the Earl of Carlisle, now gone to England in search of health. Only Morgan would sail in King James' armed ship and receive a salute of thirteen guns from our castle."

"'Tis Morgan!" another cried who had been looking through his glasses. "'Tis our admiral!" he shouted, and the whole crowd, forgetful of their recent broil, began to cheer as though like to split their throats.

The Governor straightened his countenance

and began crying out orders, sending men running now this way, now that, making busy preparations for this honored guest. The guns of the fort began to salute almost before the echo of those from the castle had ceased to reverberate. Every man was busy with his own affairs, and they had no thoughts for my lord or his challenge.

I turned towards him as he stood on the terrace gazing at the incoming packet. His face was ghastly white, his eyes were wide open and staring.

"My lord!" I cried, running to him in great alarm. "You are ill and must needs seek rest in the house with your aunt and her woman."

"Did they say Morgan?" he asked hoarsely, though he took not his eyes for one moment from the incoming sails.

"Yes, my lord, Sir Henry Morgan," the mate answered for me. He was standing at my side, though I knew not of his presence, and I read that look of jeering suspicion, now constantly in his eyes. "You seem greatly rejoiced at his coming, my lord. I'll warrant that he is no enemy of your father's."

"No," my lord replied, "he is his very true friend and has seen him within the year. I saw him often in my childhood and once at the court of King Louis, scarce two years ago."

THE boat that left the packet and came swiftly towards us had six rowers, and, in its stern sat the Welshman about whose robberies and ferocious cruelties the whole world had talked, and from which that part that went to sea, I doubt not, prayed to be delivered. That the king who frolicked with Rochester, and smiled at the daring villainy of Blood, should have made him a knight of the realm of England, was no small wonder. For Henry Morgan's hand had ever been turned against Spanish tyranny and greed in the New World, and though by it he had filled his own coffers and lined his own purse, there were not many in England or France who did not look upon him as more daring a hero than a villainous rogue. They who crowded the wall and the terrace of Hispaniola were mostly of these two nations, and the cheers they let out at his coming were both lusty and sincere.

When his boat grated on the sand the Gov-

ernor and other dignitaries were there, hat in hand, to give him welcome. He was a tall, thickset man with a bushy black beard. He wore a coat of rich black velvet slashed and lined with leaf-green, his lace cravat was tied in a fringed bow with long ends, and his sword belt was stiff with gold lace. His rough hunting shirt showed through the slashings of his sleeves and his two brace of pistols were slung over his shoulder in a silken sling.

"I had thought you gave me brave welcome, Governor D'Oyeron," he cried after he had received their greetings. "But the watchman in the castle called that you had mutiny in your city. From what quarter did the squall arise, sir?" he asked, then looking at the people who crowded about him, added, "Though I see small sign of such a push of wind, unless it be the naked steel which many of your men hold in their hands."

"It was but a brawl, your Honor," the Governor of the buccaneer stronghold answered, "It was easily quelled."

"My lord's challenge still lies untouched at your feet; will your Honor lift it?" the mate said, stepping from the group of those who stood around Count Huguenin. His words were addressed to the Governor of the town, though his eyes were on Morgan.

"Ah, ha! Bras de Fer," Morgan exclaimed. "What is this; you have challenged your Governor?"

"Not I, Sir Henry," he replied. "But a gentleman whom we met in the streets of Augustine, and to whom—and the two females with him—Captain Hawkins pledged honorable passage and safe shipment to Charleston. Captain Hawkins was dangerously wounded and lies in his cabin raving with fever, so I sailed in the York with that prize as her consort," and he motioned towards where the two ships lay at anchor in the bay.

"She is a great galleon, sir," Morgan cried, looking at the two ships with sparkling eyes and apparently forgetful of all else. "And I'll warrant had rich lading. Hawkins was wounded you say, and you brought in the prize and would now see his pledges fulfilled. 'Tis but your duty as a gentleman and sea-rover, sir. But who is the man and for what grievance has he challenged your Governor?" His eyes were upon our group and I saw him single me out. My lord stood somewhat to the rear, shielded by the great body of the mate, and contrary to his wont, appeared to be content to be so screened.

"He is a French nobleman, your Honor," the mate replied. "A young gallant of King

Louis' court and so good a swordsman that I believe no man can stand against him. He disarmed our captain in the streets of Augustine, and spared my life when we fought man to man on board that same Spanish galleon."

"Zounds! mate," Morgan cried, "but I would see that gallant of King Louis who could disarm Tom Hawkins and beat you at sword play. Adzooks! Bras de Fer, he must be more devil than man. Where is he, I say? Show yourself, my hearty. Which is the man?"

My lord pushed between us, and, stepping out, stood before the titled pirate.

"I am the man, your Honor," he said. He was very pale, but he held his head high, and looked Morgan boldly in the face.

"You!" the robber chief cried staring at him, a puzzled look of astonishment in his eyes. "You!" he repeated, stepping forward and laying hold of his shoulder as though the better to see his face.

I held my breath hard and grasped my sword, for I did not know what his next words would be or how he would use the one whose shoulder he grasped.

"Yes, I, Sir Henry Morgan," my lord said haughtily, shaking off the pirate's hand and stepping away. My lord's face flamed crimson, and though he shot a glance at the man whom

he had claimed as his father's friend, he did not face him as boldly as was his custom, nor did he swear or rail at him; instead, his eyes drooped and his head hung down as though in very shame.

"What in the devil ails our young count?" I heard the French pirate, whose head was swathed with a woman's petticoat, exclaim. "Why does he not answer the old fighting-cock up boldly and like the young gallant that he is? He is no coward to stand before any man with hanging head like a shame-faced woman."

"Pish!" answered his fellow. "He is but chapfallen because the old robber's coming has put off his fight. He had it in his heart to spit the Governor with one hand tied behind his back."

Sir Henry Morgan stared at my lord sternly; then, as though recovering himself, he cried, doffing his hat and bowing low: "I crave pardon, my lord. You look so young to have won so big a reputation that I could not believe you serious, but thought you tried to cozen me. By what name do men call you, my lord?"

"Uldric Huguenin," he answered; then he added, "I doubt not your Honor knows of my father."

"Yea, I knew him well. And your mother

also, my lord. I knew your mother. But can you tell me by what adventure you chanced on board that pirate ship?" There was both suspicion and sternness in Morgan's voice and eyes when he asked the question.

My lord went pale, then red again. His head stiffened up and in the voice that he answered there was all of dignity but no passion.

"With my aunt and her serving woman I was taken captive to Augustine," he answered. "The friends who would have rescued us were driven back or imprisoned and tortured in their iron cage. Then, your Honor," he continued, and I saw that his bearing became prouder, and he raised his eyes as though not afraid to meet the gaze of any man, "they pressed me hard, and because I saw that my only hope of escape lay in a bold step, I took that step. With my aunt and her serving woman I sought to steal out of the city, prepared to fight if need be. I did have to fight, your Honor, but not the foes that I feared. Having beat down the sword of their leader, he pledged me and the two who followed me honorable treatment and safe passage to my father's home in Charleston. What I did on board that ship is known to all its company and they are here to report it."

"You have your father's courage, my lord,"

Sir Henry Morgan said when he had ceased to speak. "And I'll warrant that had nature formed you a woman you would be as chaste as your mother. She was as pure as snow, though she carried not out the poet's simile by being as cold as ice, for she had a generous heart for even erring human creatures. She lived an honored guest among us here, my lord, and though she knew well our many crimes, she held us not as damned souls unfit for her compassion. She was both pure and beautiful and in all my rovings both by sea and land I have seen but one like her——"

Bras de Fer leaned forward and whispered in my ear.

"That one was the Spanish lady whose beauty drove him mad," he said, "and though he gave up the sea and did all else for her sake, she would have naught to do with him but remained true to her husband."

"Had you been a maid, my lord," Sir Henry Morgan went on, "I could make no higher wish for you than that you might be as pure as your mother. You are even more beautiful, my lord."

"I thank your honor," my lord replied, and again his face went white, then red and his head hung down.

"I have often visited your father's house,"

Morgan said, " both in years gone and within a few months past. You were not there, my lord."

" No, your Honor, I was not there, for they sent me early away. But you saw my sister Antoinette? "

" Your sister Antoinette! " he cried, roaring with laughter, as though the very mention of Mistress Antoinette Huguenin's name would make him split his sides. " Yea, verily I saw your sister Antoinette. She is a court beauty now, my lord, and hath a quick and ready wit, I'll warrant."

" You saw her not when you were last at court, your Honor? " my lord said, smiling, and I thought I caught a twinkle in his eye, as his gaze shifted somewhat and for a moment took in the face of Bras de Fer, who had been a most attentive listener to it all. " You saw only me and because I played at swords with the grandson of the king they thought us but two striplings and unworthy to name to so great a buccaneer chieftain. Still you remembered well my face, your Honor? "

" 'Tis not such that any one would soon forget, my lord, and that they taught you right well at court, I'll warrant," he cried heartily. " Your face and your sister's wit are not soon to be forgotten."

" Zounds! " I heard the mate exclaim and I

turned and looked at him. "D'ye know, captain, I had it in my mind more than once that it was Mistress Antoinette masquerading us all? I heard such tales of her daredevil tricks at the French court and of the way she was wont to fright the sisters of the convent by climbing trees, scaling walls and what not, that, verily, I thought the young gallant his own sister."

"They are much alike," I told him. "But my lord appears full half a head the taller." Then I turned my attention again to the converse of those two who interested me most.

"But why did you challenge the Governor? Tell me that, my lord."

"'Twas no quarrel of my making, your Honor. I had no ill will against the Governor of your town, as I proved by claiming his remembrance and boldly telling him my name."

"He is his father's son, Sir Henry Morgan, and because of that I hate him," D'Oyeron cried hotly.

"Nay, nay, man," Morgan cried. "Since you hate him so much why would you give him the pleasure of killing you? I have seen the young blade at it, and verily, I tell you he could spit you with one hand tied behind his back?"

"Ha, ha! he, he!" came a snickering laugh from the group at my back. "That was just

what the young count laid out to do when the great guns sounded and scared all men's wits away."

The crowd stared. Then, as the pirates pushed forward from amongst them Sim Taviss pranked in all the glory of a painted face and his borrowed finery, the crowd stared again, and then burst into roars of laughter, Sir Henry Morgan leading off.

My lord put out his hand and touched the cowering figure.

"Shrink not back, Sim," he said in a kinder tone than men who had only heard his wild oaths and haughty commands would scarcely have thought him capable of. "Hold up thy head, man. 'Tis because thy beauty pleases them that they laugh so loud."

"Who is thy fantastic ape, my lord?" Morgan cried, wiping the tears that his laughter had shaken from his eyes and pointing at Sim Taviss, who reassured by my lord's words, stood boldly at his side gazing at the two governors.

"His name is Taviss, your Honor. A name with a good English sound, and I'll warrant he was a bright boy when his mother had him christened Simeon, eh, Sim?" my lord cried clapping his hand on the boy's shoulder approvingly. Then raising it with great apparent carelessness he pushed back the plastered love-

lock, disclosing a deep scar that extended from the temple half way across his head. "'Twas from a Spanish love-lick, and through it his brain oozed out and left him as you see. He ran away from home and went to sea, his ship was taken and he became a galley slave—'twas then it was done—Hawkins rescued him and—perhaps 'tis fellow feeling, your Honor, for I know not what they in Augustine would have done with me. I call him my L'Angeli, for he runs to do my slightest bidding and is a most merry jester."

"L'Angeli!" exclaimed Morgan, laughing again. "You named him well, my lord, for King Louis' titled fool did not ape the dress and manners of his royal lord more closely than thy simpleton has striven to do. Come, my boy,' he said, speaking to Sim and pointing with his sword to my lord's glove as it lay still untouched on the ground. "I would have thee useful as well as ornamental. Pick up thy master's glove and give it back to him."

Then he turned to the Governor of that city which he had founded as the stronghold for men who followed his trade, and for which no man had ever found a name.

"Colonel Huguenin is a true friend of my own, D'Oyeron, as well as yourself," he said, speaking quite sternly. "I know right well the

cause of your hatred for him. But, pish! man, it is an act unlike a gentleman and the Governor of a buccaneer city to foist on a lad a quarrel that had its beginning before he came into the world. Put up your sword, D'Oyeron; and you also, my lord, for I would see you touch hands. You call him the son of your enemy, Sir Governor; but I say he is the child of the girl you loved. That he has her courage he has proved to you; and have your eyes grown so old, man, that you cannot see her face smiling through his richer coloring? Put up your blade, man, and give the young gallant your hand. My lord, you are the younger."

My lord stepped forward and extended his hand.

"I pray your Honor to forget my bragging words," he said, speaking so loud that all who stood about must hear. "I came into your city with only friendliness in my heart, but when you received me with curses I was angered and said all that I could to urge you on. I pray your Honor to forget my bragging folly," he repeated, and I thought that I had never seen so gallant a figure or so noble a face. D'Oyeron —with Morgan's eyes pressing hard upon him —took my lord's hand, muttering something that I did not hear because I made not the effort.

Then obeying the command of the pirate chief the crowd scattered and we followed them —my lord, Sir Henry Morgan, and D'Oyeron walking side by side—towards the great house set apart by the buccaneers for their Governor.

"Did ye see him beat your Governor, dog?" cried the pirate wearing the velvet jerkin to his old enemy with the pezos earrings.

"Ye lying fool!" exclaimed the fellow addressed. "They did not even cross swords and ye know it."

"Yet he beat him, I say," cried the young Frenchman with the swathed head. "He beat him as surely as he did our mate, and held his sword over his heart as long. When the Governor said it was a brawl soon settled, did he give him the lie, though his challenge lay untouched where all men could see it? Not he. Our mate must tell Sir Henry, and then, not until he had been called for more than once, did he push himself forward. He is as gallant as he is brave."

"O, ye are worse daft about the young blade than all the other fools," snarled he of the gold pezos. "Because he has a pretty face, a fine shape and a bragging tongue, ye think him a king."

"I think him surely the king of gentlemen,"

the Frenchman answered. "For I have never seen his mate."

"He is not the only one in our company who rates the young count high, Captain Middleton?" questioned the mate who walked at my side.

I looked into his eyes that I might read his true meaning.

"He has the true courage," I answered him simply enough and with all sincerity.

"Yea, he is as ready to forgive as he is to draw his blade." Then he added with a chuckle as though amused by his own mistake. "On my life, I thought him his sister in masquerade. When I saw the expression on your face, that day on the poop deck when he spied the colors on the merchantman; when I read what I thought to be the look in his eyes, I suspected there was some trickery. Thinking of it all, his wondrous beauty and the mad tales I had heard about Mistress Antoinette—and never having heard that she had a brother—I began to suspect that it was she herself. I tried hard to lay hold of something, either in his face or his actions to prove my suspicions."

"You found nothing?" I questioned, looking at him covertly, still in doubt of his sincerity.

"That there was nothing to find out was proved by Sir Henry's words," he cried. "Though I doubt not if there had been he would have allowed any man discover it. You know as well as I, Captain Middleton, that the young spark would prove a match for King Louis in dissembling as well as at sword play."

"Yes," I answered. "I think he would." And in my heart I believed that I spoke the truth.

WE lodged in the Governor's house where the four great state chambers, according to Sir Henry Morgan's orders were set apart for the use of my lord, his English aunt, her serving woman, and the Spanish prisoners.

"Ods bodikins! man," Sir Henry cried when D'Oyeron was for sending the count and his women to the public house of the town; "the lad is the guest of your town and it is not fit that he should go elsewhere. He has been tenderly nurtured and is the son of my old friend and I will not have him so treated. Besides consider how near he stands to your king and what benefit a word from him might be to your city."

'Twas the last argument that won D'Oyeron to his way of thinking, though I do not doubt that, if Sir Henry so willed it, my lord would have lodged in the state rooms no matter what the Governor of the town said. Though the titled pirate no longer followed the sea, but

lived in splendor as Commissioner of Admiralty in Jamaica, he had not given up his authority among the buccaneers, and that he was not slow to let all men see and understand.

"Ask Count Huguenin his pleasure about the bestowal of the fathers, Bras de Fer," he cried when the mate would have sent them with the women.

"Would you have them with you in the great house, my lord?" the pirate asked, doing as he was bid.

"Nay, nay! Sir Captain," my lord exclaimed, laughing as though at a good joke. "Though I still remain the Grand Turk and have my harem with me, I will not need the fathers. I have confessed to Sir Henry Morgan and he has shriven me."

"Nay, my lord," Morgan exclaimed with a great laugh. "I have received your confession but I have not yet named your penance."

My lord's cheeks flamed scarlet and his eyes seemed busy with the floor. I held a still tongue and turned my gaze away, for I had a part to play and determined to prove a good actor, though I liked not the sound of his jest.

The buccaneer chief, let it be known, the first night of his coming, said while we sat at the feast spread in his honor in the great room of the Governor's house, that he could not make a

long stay in the stronghold of his brotherhood. My lord was at his right hand with his aunt seated beside him, while the black woman and Sim Taviss stood at their backs and served them. I was placed some distance farther down the long table among sea captains, rich planters, richer merchants and some few hunters who had returned to the city early from their hunts. The mate was at my side and around the end opposite the Governor and the one in whose honor the feast was laid I saw other of the pirates who had sailed with the York and her captured galleon. The whole company was pranked in its best, for Morgan was in many ways the reverse of other buccaneers and to most men who live rough lives away from the centers of civilization; he had the taste of a true court gallant in his dress and required a like regard from those about him.

I have been much at the court of England, and have visited the courts of France and Holland, and seen many tables set for kings, but I have never seen one with richer services of gold, silver and crystal, or a braver show of gold and silver damask. The women who were present were the wives and daughters of merchants and some few planters; and I judged from their bearing all of them were women who had been wont to live among more gentle

surroundings. The Spanish prisoners were not there, nor were any of the class with whom I had been told the buccaneers were accustomed to have their orgies. This was to be no orgie, I knew, for I had heard Morgan give the order that none under the influence of liquor should be admitted.

"I stay among you only long enough to fit up my ship against foul weather, mates," he said, after the first toast, when they had all shouted his name and that of his greatest victory many times. "There has been a storm brewing for me ever since the death of my royal friend and master placed on the throne his brother, the Catholic James. That storm has now taken definite shape and I look for it to break before the world is one month older. I was Governor of Jamaica—acting deputy for my lord, the Earl of Carlisle, as many of you know—until the arrival of the last ship, and in it the gentleman appointed to succeed me. Up to the sailing of that ship I still remained Commissioner, but by it I received private warning from a friend at court, that the next ship sailing will bring with it a royal order to the Governor, for my return to England to answer the complaints of the King of Spain and his subjects."

"What care you for their complaints?" a pirate from the lower end of the board bellowed.

"I sailed as your gunner against Puerto Bello and Panama and will follow you into hell to fight the devil himself. What does Morgan care for the King of Spain?"

"Aye! aye!" was shouted lustily up and down the long board. "What does Morgan care for the King of Spain? We have ships in plenty and men in plenty to take Havana itself. Come! lead us against the greedy dons and we'll harry them until not one of their flags is left to flutter in the New World. Lead us against Havana!" they shouted. "She is rich in treasure against any man's counting and her warehouses burst with baled merchandise. Come! lead us against Havana."

But Morgan shook his head and when the shouts had ceased, cried: "If they press me hard and I see naught ahead of me but a dungeon cell or an arm's length of rope, I say not what I will do, brothers. Yet, when I left ye, I planned not to return to my old life, as ye all know. I have been proud to wear the title which my king bestowed upon me and glad to serve my country in a peaceful manner in America. Then," he added, after a moment's pause and his voice had a gentler tone, "since leaving you I have taken me a wife and gotten me children, with whom I would spend my days in peace. But if the

worse should seem like to come to the worse and the Catholic James would pleasure the King of Spain by casting me into prison, or swinging me from the gallows, I may turn again to the high seas."

"Mates," Bras de Fer exclaimed, rising at my side and holding high his golden goblet, "there are many strong arms among us, and enough treasure to buy many great ships well fitted. They are both at the service of our Admiral and I would drink to his early return to the high seas."

Before he finished every man of that company was on his feet, excepting only him in whose honor the feast was given, my lord and myself. With cups filled to the brim they shouted as they drank: "We are at your service, Admiral, both men and treasures. We would sail under the merry black flags and drive all Spaniards to hell."

The cry went back and forth, around that long, glittering board until the tall roof seemed reverberating with, "Under the merry black flag!" "Drive all Spaniards to hell!" "Morgan our admiral!" "Puerto Bello!" and "Panama!" The din was ear-splitting and the great torches flickered in their sockets on the walls from their poundings on the table.

"I would see your admiral's flag wave over

the Phœnix," Bras de Fer cried when the noise had become less great. "She is a gallant ship and now that she has been properly armed is a fit leader for a great fleet."

Then the pirates who sat around the end of the board shouted: "Let your pennant wave above the Phœnix, Admiral."

"And what ship call ye the Phœnix, Bras de Fer?" Morgan shouted, raising his voice so that his words were distinct above the din.

"'Tis the Spanish packet, your honor, that we took on our last fight in the gulf of Maracaibo," the mate answered. "When we divided her treasure I bought her before the mast, and left her in this bay to be careened and fitted against my return. Now I would have her the flagship of your admiral's fleet."

"Aye! aye!" yelled the pirates around the end of the board facing Morgan. "We would have ye admiral on board the Phœnix."

"'Tis a friendly offer, Bras de Fer," the famous pirate replied, commanding silence by a wave of his hand towards those at the foot of the table who still shouted and beat the table; "and gallantly made. I sail at the crack of dawn the day after to-morrow, and if you can be ready so soon would be glad of your company. For though it seems wisest that I make Jamaica in King James' packet, I would have as

a consort one who could enter the harbor and get tidings of the news brought by the ship last sailing from England. If the tidings should prove unhealthy for my safety 'tis my plan to go aboard my consort and send the Swallow back to the governor of the island."

"Seize her! Admiral. Seize her and hoist the black flag!" the pirates shouted, and I think every man who sat at the board save three repeated the shout. "She is a fine ship, heavily armed, and will make a jolly buccaneer."

"With the armed packet and Morgan for Admiral," shouted the French pirate with the broken head, "we could capture every ship of the plate fleet that sails brimming with crown wealth from the mines of Peru, and the shoals of galleons by which the Genoese ship their droves of negro slaves from the coast of Guinea."

"Nay, my friend," Morgan replied with firmness. "I sail in His Majesty's packet as his Commissioner of Admiralty and will commit no act against his law. The packet goes back to the port from which she sailed to be returned in all safety to the Governor, but if I find my commission withdrawn and my liberty threatened I go not with her."

"But, to chase the Spaniards from the New World, ah!" cried an old hunter, the Dutch-

man who had claimed acquaintance with the parents of Count Huguenin. Then turning to the mate he exclaimed; "I would store the Phœnix with meat, both bucan and salt, Captain Bras de Fer, and the reward I ask is one piastre from the first Spaniard that you capture under the Admiral's flag."

"Yea, verily, I will give ye pound of gold for every pound of flesh that ye store her with, brother," the mate cried. "And gladly, if the Admiral will but consent to sail on her."

"That may be, that may be, Bras de Fer," Morgan cried. "An ye receive the tidings I look for I'll be blithe to sail your Admiral, on board your Phœnix. I have passed too many days on the high seas to care to end my life in a dungeon. The day after to-morrow you sail my consort and mayhap I will return your Admiral."

"Our Admiral! our Admiral!" they all shouted, repeating the title over and over again, and so loud that it seemed as though the top of the great room would be thundered off. Men and women alike rose, climbed on the stools and benches upon which they sat, snatched off their scarfs and kerchiefs, and waved them wildly over their heads; some beat upon the table with the gold and silver vessels from which they drank as though they had been made of meanest

metal. From that time I noticed they called him no more by the title with which they had greeted his coming, but he was always their Admiral.

When they had well nigh beat the drums out of my ears with their clamor, Morgan commanded silence and seating himself began putting the silver implements that he had used during his meal into the cadenas of carved gold that sat at the side of his plate. At this signal the English lady rose and the other women with her, prepared to leave the room.

"You do well to retire so early, my lord," Morgan said, as the young gallant left his seat and assisted his aunt in drawing back the great chair in which she sat. "'Tis said, and I think rightly, that early hours give health, wealth and happiness. Three things worthy of consideration, I do assure you. I wish you both good-night, sir, and may you have rosy dreams."

"I thank your Honor," my lord said, returning the pirate's courtesy with a graceful bow, "but before I leave I would crave a favor."

"You are the child of an old and true friend, my lord," the Admiral cried. "For your own sake there be few things that lay within my power that I would not grant you. Speak, my lord, and name the manner in which I may serve you."

"I would return to my father's house in Charleston, your Honor," my lord replied. "Captain Hawkins is still ill, the York is to be careened in this harbor, and Captain Bras de Fer to sail on his newly christened vessel. I ask that your Honor will see fulfilled the pledges made myself and my friends in Augustine. I would beg that you take us with you to Jamaica, where we can easily take passage aboard some ship sailing to England, or her colonies on the continent."

Morgan looked at him steadily, drawing his eyes to a narrow slit. The company was silent and I held my breath, waiting for his reply. It seemed no short time, and I saw the English lady step forward and her lips opened as though she was about to add her voice to my lord's petition. The buccaneer chief threw back his head and laughed heartily.

"I received your confession, my lord," he cried. "An you do the penance I appoint you, I will take you and your two friends, and your serving woman with me on board the king's packet, and land you all safe in Charleston. Will you do penance, my lord?"

"You are my father's friend," my lord answered, meeting his gaze squarely; "you held my mother in high esteem. Though I honor you highly, I would know whereof I speak be-

fore I pledge my word. What is your will, your Honor?"

Again the pirate Admiral let out a great laugh and stretching out his hand grasped my lord's shoulder and drew him nearer. The blood surged through my brain and beat upon my temples until my head seemed burning. I held my breath and grasped my sword until the carving on the hilt was printed on my flesh. The buccaneer whispered, it could scarce have been more than a word. My lord jerked his shoulder from his grasp and stood facing him with flushed cheeks and wide opened eyes. I drew my sword half from its scabbard, and know not what mad act I would have committed, what wild words I would have uttered, had I not felt the pressure of the mate's hand upon my shoulder and heard his voice:

"By my faith! Captain Middleton, your young fighting-cock is in no danger," he said. "The Admiral does but whisper in his ear—but—" and I saw the same suspicious gleam wipe out the puzzled look in his eyes— "you put a strange thought in my brain."

I shook myself free from his grasp and might have given him no mild reply, had I not heard my lord's voice.

"I will do the penance you ask," he was saying. "I thought to leave as I came among you,

but since you are my father's friend, Sir Henry Morgan, and I trust you, I will do as you ask. I wish you good-night, your Honor. Gentles, good-night."

"My lord!" a voice from amongst those at the foot of the table cried, "go not away with the women. We would have you sing for us, my lord. Sing the gay songs that you sang as you swung in the rigging."

It was the young French pirate who first spoke, but before he had finished every man of the crews who had sailed with my lord, raised his voice and lustily shouted for a song.

My lord hesitated; then Morgan spoke, and he stopped and his aunt and her serving-woman stopped with him. The women who were all following them from the room waited also.

"Come! my lord," Morgan cried, "since you go so soon away will you not pleasure the men who sailed with you? They love your gallant ways, and would hear you sing. Will you not pleasure your pirate shipmates, my lord?"

"Yea, that I will," my lord cried, turning back and facing the company. "Find me place, mates. Where would you have me stand to sing to you?"

"There my young fighting-cock, on the middle of the table where stands the great flagon of wine," the savage with the pezos earrings

cried, pointing to a position near the center of the long board.

"Aye," cried the wearer of the velvet jerkin. "Stand high up where we all can see, and without your coat and waistcoat; just as you stood when you beat our mate at swords on the galleon's deck. We would see you in your pretty shirt with its ruffles, my lord, that all men may admire your handsome shape."

My lord's laugh rang out like a merry chime. He drew off the two garments named and throwing them into the arms of his aunt's serving woman, sprang upon a chair, and then to the table.

"Make room! brothers," he cried, motioning to those who sat around that part of the table. "Back against the wall, all of you, if you would hear my song."

His head was held high, his cheeks flamed and his great eyes were like dark pools flashing in the starlight. He stood in the center of that cloth of gold covered table, strewn with eating vessels of gold, silver, and crystal and what fragments of the feast remained; a hand rested against his hip, and one foot was a little advanced.

His red lips unclosed, and he sang the maddest, wildest of rollicking French bottle-songs. There was the swaggering riot of a braggart

court gallant in every word and measure. At the end the men cheered and the women clapped their hands and called for more. Then he sang again the English ballad we had heard on board ship and the applause was even greater. Old women waved their scarfs and kerchiefs, while the young ones snatched the vines that trailed around the windows on the outer wall; they pulled off handfuls of leaves and blossoms and flung them at the singer's feet. My lord bowed low to their applause; he flung kisses from the tips of his fingers to those who threw him flowers and began another ballad.

There was an uproar near the lower end of the great room and the ruffian with gold pezos in his ears was seen contending with Sim Taviss.

"Have ye no manners, dog," Bras de Fer cried, "that ye cannot cease your brawling when your betters would hear his lordship sing?"

"'Tis the fool, Captain," the pirate grumbled. "He will give me no peace but continues to bellow into my ear, thinking he should sing with the young gallant."

"Canst sing, man?" my lord cried, smiling down at his fantastic ape.

"I know your love ballad, my lord," he answered, with something like a gleam of intelli-

gence sparkling in his eyes. "I oft sang it with my mother."

"And by my faith you shall sing it now," my lord cried with one of his high ringing laughs. "Up, man, up, I say, and lend your voice that all may hear us sing the song together."

At his bidding the fool came forward, clambered upon the table and stood at my lord's side. It was an uncommon figure he cut and the pirates laughed in derision.

"Hold up thy head, man," my lord cried, clapping him on the shoulder and scowling angrily at his deriders. "Sing out bravely that all may hear the fine words."

Then they began and with my lord's high sweet tones there sounded a voice deep and rich as the minor chord in a great organ. Men and women stared and listened at my lord and his caricature as they stood and sang that old English love-song. The beauty of the one was heightened by contrast with the fantastic clownishness of the other, and the song was rendered twice as sweet by his deep, rich tones. The song ended and the burst of applause seemed twice as great. Flowers fell around them, heaped up about their feet. One girl wove a garland and flung it at my lord's head; it fell upon his shoulder.

"See! Sim," my lord cried, lifting it from his shoulder and placing it upon the fool's head. "'Twas made for thee, and you shall wear it while we sing another ditty. Zounds! man, it does become thy beauty." And he smiled at the wild uproar that greeted the appearance of the flowered garland upon the stringy love-locks of his grotesque mimic. "We will sing them another, since they do so love thy sweet face and handsome shape."

That one ended he would not sing again, though the whole company, even his old enemy, the Governor, called lustily for more.

"I am weary and would rest," he said, springing down from the table. Then, turning, he swept a low bow, first to the two dignitaries, then to the people. "I thank you for your courtesy and wish you happy dreams. Sir Henry Morgan, to-morrow on the stroke of midnight I do the penance you require of me."

"Zounds! my lord," the buccaneer cried, "'tis a rare joy you promise and one that will not soon be forgotten. Rosy dreams, lady. Good-night, my lord."

My lord returned his bow, then with another including all he left behind said:

"Pleasant dreams, friends."

Then he gave his hand to his aunt and led her out, followed by her black serving woman and his fanciful mime.

THE next day at sunrise the pirates divided their booty, and for the nonce at least there was no quarreling, each man being fully satisfied on receiving as his share two thousand pounds, estimating at ten piastres to the pound. The jewels and merchandise as well as the captured galleon itself were sold before the mast and fetched good prices, the planters and rich merchants of the town buying the greater part. The galleon was bought by the Admiral and given in charge of the wounded man who had sailed as surgeon of the York, to be careened and victualed against such a time as he would receive sailing orders.

I would have refused the full share that the pirates pressed upon me, for they said it was my due, as one who fought against the Spaniard and sailed the galleon into port; but my lord came up and caused me to change my mind.

"'Tis a fortunate thing for us after all, Captain Middleton," he said, letting his eyes meet mine—a thing he seldom did, "that we were held prisoners in Augustine. You would not

have earned two thousand pounds on your Charleston planting of tobacco and indigo in twice two years, while I—" here he laughed merrily—" might have lost twice that much at gaming. I have pocketed my share, Captain, and thank my stars that a certain afternoon, walking on the sea wall, I spied you swinging in the iron cage."

" Yet, my lord," Bras de Fer cried sharply, the flicker of suspicion I had before noticed in his eyes grown to a gleam of triumph, " Captain Middleton did assure me that he had never clapped eyes upon you until he saw you aboard the York."

" He spoke the truth, sir," my lord assured him meeting his gaze with a most placid countenance. " He scarce knew that my father had a son. When I walked on the sea wall Captain Middleton was fainting in the iron cage . 'Twas my sister, Mistress Antoinette Huguenin who told me his name and of his friendship for my father. I'll warrant he did not disclaim her acquaintance. Captain Middleton did make most brave pretense of loving my sister, Sir Henry," my lord went on, with a gleam of roguishness in his eyes that only made them appear the more beautiful. " But since he has been aboard your buccaneer ship, on my faith,

I do not believe that he has once thought of her in Augustine."

"So he pretended to love your sister, my lord," Morgan cried, roaring with laughter. I saw that he was ever ready to laugh at the young gallant's light jests and I noticed with no little displeasure that he kept him ever under his eye. "'Tis well you have forgotten her, Captain Middleton, for she is a most fickle jade and has already proved the undoing of more than one good man. Besides, if reports be true, she thinks no more of her friends in the New World. There is a certain French nobleman, so 'tis said,—the Duc de Richelieu—who has possessed himself of her heart and will marry her if the king will give him her hand."

My lord's face was on fire, his eyes sought the tiles of the Governor's piazza on which we sat, and he bit his lips and drew his black brows together.

"She must have changed since your news, Admiral," Bras de Fer exclaimed; "for she refused to leave Augustine with my lord because she was so determined to wed the younger D'Alva, who succeeded his uncle as governor."

"So you left your sister in Augustine, my lord, and she was to wed the Spaniard?" cried

Morgan, laughing as though at a very merry jest.

"Yea, I left her in Augustine, your Honor," my lord replied, smiling not too merrily. "If her humor changes and she weds not the don, she will not marry His Grace of Richelieu, that I'll warrant."

"Then mayhap it will be Captain Middleton, after all," the buccaneer cried still laughing, and my lord's head was bent so low that I could not see his face. "She is well worth the winning, Captain, for though 'tis said she has a temper of her own, she is so great a beauty and has such a wondrous quick wit, that were I foot-loose I would follow her to the end of the world but what I'd take her from all other men. Dost think she would look at an old sea dog, my lord?"

"She has the contrariness of a woman, your Honor," my lord replied, his eyes on the blade that he had drawn from its scabbard and was busily polishing with his fine wrought handkerchief. "There is no telling what a woman will do." Then he sprang to his feet, exclaiming: "Here comes Master Swann, to give us notice of the hocksing, I'll warrant."

"Yes, my lord," the old hunter replied, as he approached the piazza with some half dozen engages following him.

Master Swann was an Englishman—one of that ten thousand shipped to the New World by Cromwell—and rated the wisest as well as the richest hunter among the brotherhood of buccaneers. "We have located a herd of bulls feeding on the side of the mountain and my slaves guard them with dogs. The horses and chairs are now being made ready in the Governor's court, and if the Admiral and your lordship will notify your friends, we will leave at once for the rendezvous, there to partake of our rough fare and after the noon hour to go to the little prairie where my engagés and slaves have orders to gently drive the cattle."

Master Swann with the two governors and my lord rode at the head of the party, while I, with Bras de Fer, followed next, riding by the side of the chair of the English lady. Other women were among the party who came behind, the older ones borne in chairs on the shoulders of engagés, the younger ones riding the sedate little native horses.

We left the planted slip that surrounded the bay and entered the forest that covered the sloping sides of the foot-hills. Hesperian orchards they seemed, those woods through which we rode. The lime and the citron, growing side by side, hung their rich clusters over our heads; the pineapple showed in the prickly hedges, and

the avocada swung its pears big as pumpkins within reach of our hands; the soft custard apples were like rich golden bags of sweetness that the slaves plucked and devoured as they passed along.

The gigantic spreading leaves of the bread-fruit shaded us, while the glossy star apple and the golden shaddock dropped their masses of foliage among the tall cabbage trees with their silk cotton-buttressed trunks. We passed through the cloistered arcades of the banyan; the wild plantain with its immense green leaves, its thick bunches of fruit, and its scarlet seeds; the banana with its banner-like leaves; the fern trees and the tall feathery palms. The songs of the birds were interrupted from time to time by the strange shrieks and moanings from the droves of monkeys that clambered through the tree-tops.

In the strangeness and beauty of her surroundings the English lady at my side forgot her fright for the first time since I had seen her aboard the pirate ship. She was as happy as a child enjoying a walk through a summer garden. She cried out at the sight of the gorgeous hibiscus with its crown of scarlet and at the huge bunches of snowy amaryllis. Engagés heaped her chair with scarlet cordia, the plumiria, the white datura, and pink and saffron

flowered fence hastily plucked from the wild jungle of beauty as we moved. Once while we rested under a green tamarind and listened to the mournful creakings of a sand box tree, one of the slaves who had borne her chair, climbed into the branches of a tall pine and cut off the yellow flowered crown of a maypole aloe that shot twenty feet above our heads. Another found for her the hammock nest of an oriole with its treasure of polished eggs, while two more coming upon the lair of a wild dog stole one of the mother's sleeping pups and laid it at the English lady's feet.

My lord was pleased with the attentions showered upon her and I saw him more than once slip bright gold pieces into the hands that bestowed them. He often fell behind Morgan and D'Oyeron to exchange gay jests with her and the others who rode in the rear. But neither of the leaders would permit him to remain long away from their sides. The wind of the Governor's liking had veered completely around and he appeared as fond of my lord and his merry pranks and daring ways, as any of the pirates who had sailed with him.

"Look! my lord," he cried, pointing to where the rough sheds of a tobacco plantation showed through the trees. "There lives a fellow countryman of yours. His name is Belle Tete

and he boasts the number of engages who have fallen victims to his cruelties. He swears that they have all died of sheer laziness. He was forced to leave St. Christopher and now I but wait the fixing of a crime to make him quit our brotherhood. Do you think your Governor would receive him in Carolina? He is a good worker and has many valuable slaves."

"Zounds! your Honor," my lord exclaimed. "We have Pharaohs enough in that colony, as Captain Middleton is here to testify. There was one of whose inhumanities my father wrote me. He threw a slave into a pot of boiling molasses, because the fellow having been left to tend to its proper boiling, let it scorch. We want no more wicked slave drivers in— What is the matter with thee, Angeli?" he exclaimed, as Sim Taviss came bounding through the underbrush of the forest, his face ghastly white and his eyes like to pop from their sockets. "What have you seen, man—a roaring lion or a most valiant mouse?"

The fool grasped my lord's stirrup and pointing back into the brush muttered something, which at first none of us could make out, because of his chattering teeth. Then my lord cried: "He says, your Honor, that he saw two men beat a third until his back streamed with blood, and though he died, they still continued

to beat him. I think your Honor can get all the proof you need."

"And by the Lord, if it is so he shall suffer the extreme penalty," Morgan cried, before D'Oyeron could frame a reply. "No shouts, men," he cried, and instantly the loud talking and questioning that had begun ceased. "Send your lieutenant, Governor, and you Bras de Fer, and you Swann—" and the men whom he named left the road and struck out into the woods. "Not you, my lord," he exclaimed. But he talked to deaf ears, for the young gallant having been the first to leave his saddle, was in the lead with his simpleton.

Morgan's eyes were upon me as I left my horse and struck out after the others. He nodded approval and said, "We will meet you at the plantation houses."

I was swift of foot and more accustomed to the forest than either the Governor's lieutenant or the pirate who went with him. I passed them and came up with my lord and the old hunter, just as a most blood-curdling howl rent the air, and located that which we sought. We hastened on, breaking through the vines and low hanging bows, made desperate by the piteous cries that continued to sound before us; they were cries such as only the tortures of fiends might wring from the throats of their

victims and which I felt had more than once escaped from my unconscious lips as I swung in the iron cage at Augustine.

Bursting through a tangled mass of purple-blossomed creepers and pine boughs we came upon those for whom we looked, they were so intent on their devilish work that they did not hear us until we ran almost upon them. Then the creature who anointed the bleeding back of the bound man, threw down his mop and calabash, and fled with the monster who had directed his work

"'Tis lemon juice with pepper and salt," the old hunter exclaimed, examining the contents of the calabash. "They mopped his wounds with it to make them smart the more, the curs." And he fell to cursing while Bras de Fer and I struggled to unknot the leather thongs that bound the mutilated wretch across the trunk of a felled tree.

"He has but fainted," my lord said, as he held his hand over the fellow's heart, "He has not a villain's face and his body looks starved, and scarred from many cruel blows. Mayhap he is the son of some unfortunate gentleman, sold for his father's debts. He seems but a lad."

"My lord," the mate cried, rising from the other side of the log, "you weep!"

"Bras de Fer," my lord answered, the passion in his eyes flashing through the tears that still clung to his lashes, "if thou hast never shed tears at the sight of human misery, I call thee—devil!"

"My lord, I thought not to offend you," the giant told him with more of humility ringing in his voice than I had thought in the whole of his gigantic body. "I rate you both brave and noble."

My lord answered not a word but strode off at the side of Master Swann, while Bras de Fer, myself, the lieutenant and the fool followed, taking turns at bearing the swooning engagé. When we reached the rough reed houses of the plantation we found Morgan and the rest of the party were before us. He had called together all the slaves and engagés and held them in readiness to send under guard to the city. When the English lady saw us come bearing the fainting man, and caught a glimpse of his mutilated back, she left her chair and with her serving woman came forward offering assistance. Bras de Fer was against her doing aught, but Morgan silenced him.

"Nay," he cried to the pirate, "give the lady place and let her have her way. Woman's hands are best suited for such work, and wounds

heal all the better for the touch of woman's fingers."

She laved his back, in hopes of cleansing it of the stinging lemon juice, and having anointed it with hog's fat would have him placed in the chair in which her serving woman had ridden and her accompany him back to the city.

"He is an Englishman, your Honors," she exclaimed, with tears in her gentle eyes when Morgan and D'Oyeron remonstrated with her for wasting so much sympathy on a slave.

"He is a fellow creature with a soul and the power to suffer," said my lord, coming to her assistance, and I thought his the broader creed.

"Give them their way, Governor," Morgan cried, in his bluff manner sweeping all opposition aside. "We send these slaves and engagés to the city, Captain Middleton," he continued, answering the question which he read in my eyes, "that they may formally be declared free from the steps of the Governor's house by the town crier. Then as free citizens and members of the brotherhood of buccaneers, they receive a knife, a gun, and twenty rounds of ammunition if they wish to become hunters; a plot of land, and some few tools if planters; and arms with permission to ship before the mast if sea rovers. We have no Spaniards

among us, and such their master has proved himself to be at heart, if not by birth. If caught he will be taken by the first ship leaving the harbor and marooned on some small island. This hound whose houses and fields you see around you and whom you caught at his devil's work, will, I doubt not, escape over the mountains and tramp across the island to join some Spanish settlement on the other side. His lands and all other possessions besides his slaves and engagés are forfeit and become the common property of the brotherhood."

" 'Tis fit treatment, your Honor, and I would that Carolina had such a law for her cruel slave owners," I told him, thinking of the fiend whose plantation lay some short distance above Charleston and who the year before had killed two bound apprentices by cruelty and starvation, and who to evade the law had smeared their dying lips with raw eggs that he might be able to swear that he had pressed food upon them.

We saw the band of slaves move off toward the city, the injured wretch borne in the chair; then we set out for the rendezvous of Master Swann. The huts were of roughly woven reeds thatched with palm leaves, and there was one much larger and more closely woven than the rest in which Master Swann explained, the

bucan was smoked and stored. A huge tree had been felled and the upper side of its trunk roughly leveled with an adze. This was to serve as our table and the feast was being prepared by half a dozen black slaves.

"We have no cloth of gold, from which to serve you, lady," Master Swann said to the English lady, when the women had taken their seats upon the heaps of dry moss and freshly picked leaves with which the ground, under the limbs of the giant trees, was strewn. "Fresh banana leaves serve us for both clothes and dishes."

". . would see your bucan, Master Swann," my lord said, leaving his seat while all the others of the party were refreshing themselves by drinking sangaree. "I have heard much of your manner of curing and cooking meats and would see it done. Will you not go with us, Captain Middleton?" he asked, as the old hunter led the way towards the large hut.

Swann pulled aside the heavy mat of leaves that covered the only opening to this house, and we entered to be well nigh choked with the smoke and fumes of cooking meats. Two black slaves were busy with the work. One stood at the side of a stout wooden frame upon which was stretched the carcasses of two huge

hogs, while the other was stirring the contents of a deep and broad cauldron.

"This is our bucan, my lord," Master Swann said, pointing to the wooden frame. "These two wild boars were killed this morning, skinned and gutted, then stretched whole upon the spits. The charcoal fire has been kept burning beneath for several hours, and this man continually pricks the flesh, that the sauce, which you see in the belly, may penetrate."

"And the sauce, Master Swann," my lord questioned, "of what is it composed? It has a most appetizing odor."

"The juices of limes and citrons, salt, crushed pimento, and pepper," Master Swann answered. "Those birds," pointing to a long tray of bark piled high with freshly plucked birds, "are quails killed on the mountain side by my matelot this morning, and will be cooked by throwing them into the bellies of the two hogs. When you come to taste them, I'll warrant that your lordship will grant that you have never eaten more toothsome morsels, not even at the table of King Louis."

"That I can easily believe," my lord replied. "Captain Middleton, I will charge you to take notice how the frame of the bucan is constructed, so that when we return to Charleston

you can teach your English friends, while I will show them how to make the sauce. And the cauldron, Master Swann?"

"'Tis but the hind quarters of two oxen, my lord," replied the hunter. "In the earthen oven potatoes, yams, maize and cassava cakes are baking. These, with the wild fruits plucked fresh from the forest will make up the poor dinner which I must spread before your lordship and my other guests."

"And which Lucullus, himself, might praise, Master Swann," my lord cried heartily. "My one request is that you keep us not long waiting. I am sure it is a wish that will be most zealously backed by both Captain Middleton and Bras de Fer."

I turned my head, startled—for I had not been aware of another's presence. The pirate was there standing at my elbow. The cook piled in the birds, then leaning down cast into the bed of burning coals what remained of the skin and bones of the hogs.

"Ah!"exclaimed my lord. "By that means your smoke is rendered thick and full of ammonia, and your meat doubly sweet."

We left the hut and going back to where the others sat found the slaves busily preparing to serve the meal. It was served us on banana leaves, strips of bark and in the broken bowls

of calabash. There were no forks, and the women were compelled to call on the men for the use of their hunting knives, to cut the meats and fruits into bits small enough for their handling.

"Mind your own business!" I heard my lord command, and looking up I saw that he spoke to Bras de Fer. "I need not your helping. When I would be served I will call for L'Angeli. Get away!" he cried in the tone of a petulant child, and the chapfallen giant meekly did as he was ordered.

We left the rendezvous and mounting our horses rode on in the direction of the little prairie. It was just past the noon hour and the condonli and the passion flower of all sizes, from a thumb ring to a soup plate, had shut thei. blossoms; the monkeys and noisy parrots were no longer to be seen, and even the gleaming lizards and the bright colored humming birds hid themselves away from the vertical rays of the sun.

Coming to the edge of the forest we rested, while Master Swann skirted the prairie in search of the herd of cattle and those who watched them. It was but a short space, then, hearing his signal, the slaves led out the horses.

"I would have the black mare, Governor," my lord cried, pointing out a horse, the most

beautiful, as well as the most fiery, and restless of the lot.

"Take her, my lord," the Governor answered. "I know nothing about her temper, but that she has been trained in the sport is evidenced by the bend of her right ear."

My lord went forward, sprang lightly into the saddle and receiving the hocksing lance from an engagé rode out upon the prairie.

"You must not ride that horse, my lord," Bras de Fer exclaimed excitedly, on seeing him.

"Why not?" my lord demanded.

"Because she has no nerve and cannot stand the rush of a bull. She will obey no signal when a maddened animal turns in her direction. She unseats her rider and flees as though possessed by the devil himself. You must not ride her, my lord."

"Must is a strong word, Master Bras de Fer," my lord answered. "That can only be answered by—I will."

"Admiral," the pirate cried, appealing to Morgan, and there was the greatest concern in both his tone and manner, "my lord should not ride that horse. I have seen it throw three riders, and each one was gored and trampled by a maddened bull."

"My lord!" Morgan cried, stopping in the act of mounting the horse held for him.

He called too late. There sounded a hoarse bellow and a half score of wild cattle rushed from the forest on to the opposite side of the prairie, pursued by a crowd of shouting men and barking dogs. My lord was off to meet them, his long hocksing shaft pressed down upon his horse's right ear. Bras de Fer sprang upon a horse and rushed after him, his face white and drawn as though with mortal terror.

I FORCED my horse hard after the pirate giant, Morgan thundering at my side, while behind I could hear the hoof-beats and calls of D'Oyeron and his lieutenants.

The drivers separated the leader, a huge dun-colored bull with wide spreading horns, from the herd, and drove him to meet us in the middle of the prairie. The dogs snapped at his nose and hocks and he came charging first at one and then at another of his tormentors, until within a few rods of where we all stood waiting. The hunters whistled their dogs and they slipped away in the tall grass and left the maddened, foam-covered brute bellowing and staring about him, in search of some living thing on which to vent his fury. He saw us, threw up his head, and stared; then, with an angry sniff and bellow, as though daring us to mortal combat, he came slowly forward.

Morgan's horse, apparently without word or signal, stepped out as though in answer to this challenge, and walked forward to meet him.

The bull stopped, the horse stood still, and thus for a long minute they faced. The buccaneer sat like a statue, his rein hung loose, and the shaft of his hocksing spear pressed hard against the side of his horse's head. There was a shout from a hunter, and two dogs sprang from the sedge at the horse's feet and ran towards the bull barking furiously. They rushed at his head and one sprang up and tried to bury its fangs in his nostrils. He charged them, first one side, then the other, but they circled around him, bringing up at the horse's feet, and dared him on by their barking.

The horse stepped forward, the dogs at its side still barking. The bull glared, then lowered its head and with a mighty bellow that was flung back to us by a hundred echoes from the mountain side, lowered its head and charged straight upon Morgan's horse. Man and horse were motionless. The dogs disappeared in the tall grass. I held my breath as on the great brute came, the horse sprang to one side and the bull ran full ten feet beyond the spot where he had thought to kill his enemy.

Again the dogs were at him, daring him against the horse. He lowered his head and with a bellow even more furious came charging back. The horse sprang aside, and the brute, as though taught by experience, turned almost

as quickly, and was charging again. The hocksing lance slipped down, its half-moon shaped blade struck a hind leg of the beast nearly severing it. The horse wheeled to the left, escaping the charge of the wounded animal. Losing sight of his enemy, and infuriated by pain and fear, the bull came charging upon the group of horsemen who up to that moment had taken no part in his torture. I felt my horse stiffen under me, prepared for the charge. Not so with the beast my lord rode. She gave a sound, a half whinny of terror, and sprang forward as though to turn and flee from the approaching danger. Bras de Fer's horse was wheeled in front of her, wedging her against my animal's flank, his hand grasped her nose, pressing it down and back upon her shoulder.

The bull sank down within a few feet of our group moaning in terror and pain. The hocksing iron of his enemy had caught him around the foreleg. Morgan dismounted and drawing his hunting knife from his belt stabbed the prostrate beast in the neck behind the horns, severing his spinal marrow.

"You will change horses with me, my lord," Bras de Fer said, dismounting with his hand still grasping the nose of my lord's trembling

beast. His tone was commanding and his face was white and stern.

Without a word my lord did as he was bid, and throughout the remainder of the sport sat silent, his horse standing between my own and Bras de Fer's.

When we rode back to the spot under the trees at the edge of the forest, from which the women and slaves had watched us, the skinners were busy over the three huge bulls left dead on the field. The rest of the herd was being driven back into the forest on the mountain side by the hunters and their dogs. We wasted no time, but pushed on back to the city, for it was well towards sunset, and every man and woman in the town, excepting only the guards in the castle and the fort, were to feast with their admiral in the great tribunal hall adjoining the Governor's house.

"My lord has lost his merry humor," I heard the French pirate say to him who had sailed the galleon as my mate, after we had gone a short distance from the prairie.

"He is chapfallen because none of the bulls were of his slaying," Cayman answered, looking up into the pensive face of the nobleman, so near whose side he strode that he might have touched his stirrup. "'Tis a humor which

becomes his beauty and makes his face look like some fair flower."

"Or some sweet-faced maid, were there any half so beautiful," the Frenchman answered.

"You have your mother's eyes I'll warrant, my lord," Cayman said, respectfully touching the young count's elbow to attract his attention. "For when you looked off towards the mountains but a short while gone, I saw the woman lurking in their great solemn depths."

"If I had been a woman, Cayman," my lord asked, turning towards him a face that was all seriousness, "and had come into your midst, what then?"

The pirate opened his great jaw and laughed. "Had you been a maid taken in Augustine, my lord?" he asked.

"Yes, what then? How would ye all have used me?"

"We'd had small chance even to spy at you, my lord, so long as Cap'n Hawkins remained above deck; to that you may swear," the pirate cried.

"But him wounded and like to die, what then?" my lord still questioned most earnestly.

"Then, my lord," Cayman answered, with a grin that was not pleasant to see, "had there been a maid with but half your beauty in the state cabin after the Spaniards were slain, we

would have fought among ourselves for the possession of her, and I fear me that there would not have been men enough left alive to sail even one ship into port."

"And yet," my lord said, softly as though musing, "ye harmed not the two women I had with me nor the Spanish prisoners."

"Pish! my lord," cried the Frenchman, "you are a court gallant and should know the difference between women. There is not so much beauty among those eight women as there is in one of your lordship's white hands. But as for a maid with your great beauty, we have seen no such and would have all gone mad about her. Even the mate's strong arm and your own good sword, my lord, could not have saved her from us."

Both Cayman and the French pirate laughed as though mightily amused.

"I am glad I chanced to be a man when I fell among you—ye devils!" my lord cried, his eyes flashing with passion as he dug his spurs into his horse's flank and rode forward to join Sir Henry Morgan and the Governor.

I entered the tribunal chamber, where the feast was spread, with Bras de Fer and Master Swann, and we stopped and stared about us amazed. The great room had been enlarged by the tearing down of separating partitions between ad-

joining rooms and halls, until nearly all of the building was thrown together. The floor was covered with clean sand and strewn with fresh rushes. Against the walls trailed blooming vines, and garlands of bright flowers hung from the brackets in which were thrust flaring torches. There were nine long tables, all spread with cloths of silver, excepting the one which ran down the middle of the room. That one was covered by a cloth of gold, and glittered with the magnificence of its gold and silver vessels.

I found myself placed between the Governor's lieutenant and the captain of the Phœnix, and nearer the head of the table than I had sat the night before. My lord was not present, nor was his aunt, nor were there any places reserved for them. I looked among the slaves who served for their black woman, but did not find her. Listening, I heard the brawling voice of Sim Taviss, and knew that he sat near the foot of one of the tables covered by a silver cloth.

As the feast went on small rations of wine were served, and I heard some few complaints, but they were soon silenced by those who sat about the grumblers.

"'Tis because he has been idling in Jamaica, where I am told the English live wondrous dry

lives," I heard a rich planter say to a pirate captain. "Had he been on the high seas he would know better how to drink good wine."

"Pish! man," the pirate answered. "Ye land crabs know not the Admiral. He is neither a drunkard nor a glutton. I served under him, as ship master both when he went against Maracaibo and Panama, and never saw him the worse for too much wine. Neither hunger, nor fear, nor passion throws Morgan off his guard."

I believed the man's report and was none the happier for my belief. As the time wore on, and the feasting continued, I watched the noted pirate, listened to his talk and smiled at his jests, with a feeling that grew to bitterest hate. Dread griped my heart and I became sick from fear as I realized the helplessness of my position. I ate little, and pushed away my wine untouched. At least I too could keep a cool head and be on my guard.

There were many shouts and toasts, naming the buccaneer chief and the cities he had sacked or the vessels he had captured. Time and time again, all in that great room sprang to their feet, calling for his return to the high seas. All their toasts were drunk in his honor, and they drank as many as wine was allowed them. I played my part, though the wine in my glitter-

ing goblet remained untasted. I rose when those about me left their seats, shouted when they shouted, though I neither thought of the words I uttered nor listened to the replies. No one called for my lord, nor I thought had even noted his absence; for I had seen soon after taking my seat that all who sailed with him, save only Bras de Fer and me, had been placed at other tables.

I watched every movement of the man at the head of the board, waiting for the call of the sentinel on the fort announcing midnight. If the Governor's lieutenant sought to converse with me he got small return for his pains, and as for Bras de Fer I well nigh completely forgot his existence until feeling some one pluck at the sleeve of my doublet I turned and faced the Captain of the Phœnix.

"That was the first call," he said, his face was white and stern, as I had seen it that day on the hocksing field. "It lacks but a quarter of the hour."

"Yea," I answered, and though we had spoken no word I understood his meaning, and knew that I did not stand alone. "If he leaves the hall?" I questioned.

"I go with him were he twenty times my admiral," he answered, and his eyes glowed as burning coals. I liked not the discovery which

I felt he had made, but my heart almost bounded with joy at that which I knew he purposed.

It was perilously near the hour. My heart was beating like a tilt-hammer, and sounded in my ears as the roar of an angry sea. Bras de Fer stirred at my side, and I saw that he freed his sword from its scabbard.

Sir Henry Morgan rose and as one man we two left our seats.

"Keep your places, gentlemen," the buccaneer chief called, motioning us down with a wave of his hand. "And cover your blades. I like not the torchlight flashing upon them."

Had I been alone I might have followed his bidding, forced to it by the calm dignity of his voice and manner. But the giant at my side made no movement of obedience, and I stood with him. There was that on our faces and in our manner, I suppose, that made all about us stare. What would have been the outcome I cannot even reckon.

There was a dead silence. Morgan stood, and Bras de Fer and I were also standing. I saw that the eyes of the buccaneer admiral left our faces and traveled down over the long board. The guard on the fort called the hour of midnight.

The great door at the end of the room swung

open and we stared into the long passage leading to the Governor's house.

The corridor was so brilliantly lighted that we could see the carved figures on its sides and high vaulted roof. The door at the rear end was closed. Then it opened and a troupe of gaily dressed figures issued forth and came towards us, walking between the long line of flaring torches.

"Gentles, I would have you push your board aside," Morgan cried, waving to those around the table covered by a cloth of gold. "All others in the room will keep their seats," he commanded.

The table was pushed aside as he motioned, and those who had sat about it, both men and women, ranged themselves on either side of the place where it had stood. Two boys entered from the passage-way, and walking up the aisle thus formed, spread a strip of flame-colored damask to the foot of the dais at the other side of the room.

The troop of bright figures came on; I saw that they were women in gay dresses and flashing jewels. They reached the door, stood for a moment, hesitating before entering.

Then she who walked ahead stepped in. The room went whirling round, all else was blotted

out save only the slender figure that stood just within that door.

"Lady, will you not come and take the seat reserved for you?" Morgan cried, and though I took not my eyes from the face of her to whom he spoke, I knew that he motioned to the great chair on the dais wherein the Governor sat when giving judgment. "We have met to give you brave welcome, I do assure you," he added, and the ring of truth that sounded in his voice caused the bitter hatred that had consumed my heart to turn to sincere respect.

It was Mistress Antoinette Huguenin. Well might all the people in that great room stare, for she appeared of all women in the wide world the most beautiful. She wore neither bright colors nor flashing jewels, but a long train of spotless satin whose sheen matched in whiteness the pearls that gleamed in her black hair and around her long fair throat. She was like a slender lily as she moved up that strip of flame-colored damask with downcast eyes, and with all of shame, proud challenge, and wistful entreaty written on her beautiful face. Following her came the English lady, her black serving-woman, and the six Spanish prisoners. At the foot of the dais the Admiral and the Governor, each gave her a hand and leading her up the

steps stood before the great chair, facing the people.

"Mates!" Morgan shouted, so loud that those who sat in the farthest corners of the room must hear distinctly, "last night we cheered a young gallant who sang us gay songs of the French court, and love ballads in our own brave English tongue. To-night that youth stands before you none the less gallant because she wears the garments suited to her sex. Look! brothers, and ye women—wives, mothers and daughters—I would have ye know Mademoiselle Antoinette Huguenin—the child born in our own buccaneer stronghold who after fourteen years comes back, the famous beauty of the French court and who last night you cheered as her own brother."

The blood flamed red in her cheeks, and her head straightened up on a slender white throat.

"Sir Henry Morgan, it was for my honor that I did so unsex myself," she cried. With the dignity of her tone and bearing there was mingled a womanly grace and pleading that must have touched all those who listened. "The part I played was as a weapon at hand and I took it up. It seemed the only road left open to me by my enemies and I followed it.

"Look! I would have you know Mademoiselle Antoinette Huguenin."

Because I did many strange and unseemly things, uttered unwomanly curses, and strange oaths, unfit for the lips of an honest girl, hold me not lightly, I pray you."

"Madam," he answered, bowing low and with all deference and honor ringing in his bluff voice, "I hold you not lightly, nor could any man who was not in his heart worse than scoundrel. So far do I place you above other women, lady, that could I point to you saying; 'that is my daughter, the child begot from my loins,' I would willingly give all the brave deeds that men account to my name—even the sacking of Puerto Bello and the title with which my king rewarded me. There is none I place above you, madam; not one I hold in such high esteem."

"When you came into my city, thinking you your father's son, I sought to murder you, mademoiselle," the Governor cried, and there was none in the room who did not hear him. "But since I have known your wit and noble courage, I almost find it in my heart to forgive the man who has begotten so noble a child, even though that man be Uldric Huguenin, my bitterest enemy. Lady, I would kiss your hand craving pardon for the insults I sought to put upon you. I pray you to forgive me wholly." He bent his

knee and kissed the fingers she held out to him with all the graciousness of a queen to a subject forgiven.

"Admiral!" It was Cayman's voice, and turning my eyes I saw him among the group of pirates who had pushed themselves up from the bottom of the room to within good earshot of those who stood on the dais. "Though my lord seems my lord no longer, but his own sister and the beauty of King Louis' court, it has not changed his pretty face nor the great courage for which we loved him. He cozened us all, and beat our captain and our mate at the sword, but since he had beaten the great king before them, how could any man hope to stand? Because he has proved a maid, it makes us who sailed with him and saw his brave deeds, love him none the less, and mayhap had he chanced to fall amongst us in his woman's clothes, we would not stand before you such honest men."

"Aye, aye!" the pirates about him shouted. "Aye, aye!" the others,—merchants, hunters, planters and sea-rovers, all took up the cry until the great room was filled with their lusty shouts.

Then through all the shouting, staring crowd of men and women I saw Sim Taviss shove his way and stand at the foot of the dais, gaping at her who was the target for all eyes. Morgan

waved his hand commanding silence, and would have spoken, but the fool's voice sounded before his.

"My lord!" he cried in a tone of sharp reproach, "why put ye on woman's clothes?"

"Faith, Sim," she answered, with a half laugh, the bright humor flashing into her eyes and voice and the color into her cheeks, "'twas because they changed my name from Uldric to Antoinette. Would'st change with me, L'Angeli?"

"Nay, my lord," he replied in all seriousness. "*I* cannot kiss my elbow."

A roar of laughter as great as had been the calls of applause burst forth and men began to shout the names, "Uldric," "Antoinette." It was the young French pirate's voice that first called: "Our young court gallant with all a man's courage, a woman's wit and the beauty of an angel." Others caught it up and the shout went back and forth until Morgan again motioned silence.

"There be those among ye, brothers," he cried, "to whom the maid who sailed with you, and won your love by her pretty face and brave ways, and made you fear her good sword, will ever be a gay court gallant as the child of our old age is always a baby. But there stands one among you who has known her as woman for

many a day, and as such yesterday, shielded her from death. Bras de Fer, have ye no greeting for the lady whose presence we all would honor?"

Thus called, the captain of the Phœnix, with face no whit less pale than it had been when he plucked the sleeve of my doublet, left my side and striding up to the dais bent his knee to her who stood between the Admiral and the Governor of his brotherhood. Her face flushed crimson, her eyes drooped, as with a gesture at once pleading and timid she extended her hand to him. His head with its mass of shining fair hair sank down, past her hand, and he stooped and kissed the hem of her garment.

WITH summer in my heart we sailed through summer seas. The fourth day found us off the coast of Carolina, cruising somewhat to the south, waiting for sight of our consort before entering the harbor of Charleston.

"I would hear from Jamaica, Captain Middleton, before putting myself in the hands of your Governor," Morgan told me as we sat on the poop deck watching the bends of the green coast. "If my commission has been withdrawn and I am called back to England the Governor of your Colony will have been notified, and as the officer sworn to obey the orders of the king and the company it will be his duty to apprehend me as a fugitive."

"You sail in King James' packet; you have received no notice of a warrant against you, and you return to Charleston three citizens taken from under her very guns by the Spaniards." It was the voice of Mistress Antoinette Huguenin and her tone was an indignant pro-

test. "There can be no justice in your arrest. Besides, Governor Quarry is not wont to stick so to the letter of the law, for I have heard that he could be generous as well as just."

Morgan laughed, well pleased by her vehemence. "I thank you, lady," he cried. "But I do not purpose to put to test the generosity of the Governor of Carolina. It hath been the pleasure of the proprietors to displace Governor Quarry, and put in his stead the husband of the lady who sails as your aunt, and, who as Captain Middleton can tell you, has no fondness for sea-rovers."

"Master Joseph Moreton," I cried, amazed by his news. It was scarce two months since I had left Charleston, and at that time I knew Master Moreton and his party did not stand too high in the esteem of either the king or the proprietors. I could not even guess what upheaval had brought about his appointment. "If it is Governor Moreton now, the Sober Party is in power, and Carolina is like to have good government."

"Governor Moreton?" the English lady questioned in surprise.

"Yes, madam," the buccaneer answered, doffing his hat and bowing low. "Your husband is responsible to the company, who elects him, for the proper keeping of King James'

laws in the province of Carolina. He received his Governor's warrant by the same ship, in which sailed the gentleman who succeeded me as deputy to my lord Earl of Carlisle. Had it not been the report which that packet brought of the prisoners held in Augustine, I very much doubt me," he exclaimed, eyeing Mistress Huguenin with a droll laugh, "if I should not have believed the young court gallant, whom I found brawling in the buccaneer city on Hispaniola, in very truth the son of my old friend—the posthumous child of his mother. You were a pretty boy, Mistress Antoinette, and acted the part thrust upon you as mate of that pirate ship to the king's taste, that I'll warrant. Zounds! but I should like to see your Grand Monarque when it is reported to him. They tell me that he has the devil's own love for a merry jest, when Madam Solidity is not by with her black robed priests. Will ye tell him of your gay masquerade, lady?"

"Nay, Sir Henry," the girl answered, with a gleam of roguishness in her great black eyes, while her cheeks were rose red. "I purpose not to return so soon to France. Yet if chance had taken me there, I know of none to whom I would sooner have told the tale of my misbehavior than to King Louis. For he has the heart to enjoy a report of your wild pirate life,

and has ever proved my most indulgent master. But in the news brought you from Charleston, your Honor, was there no mention of my father?"

"Only that he had but just returned to Charleston with what remained of Captain Middleton's party and their Indian allies," he answered.

"When I last saw my father, he was in chains, and they walled him up in the dungeon of Augustine to die of thirst and starvation," she said. Then turning upon me eyes brimming with unshed tears, added, "I have much to thank you for, Captain Middleton."

"And greater reward has no man received, Captain Middleton," Morgan cried laughing, though not unkindly. "The love of a good woman is ever a gift for a man to crave; but the love of——"

"Has Captain Middleton won the love of such a one?" Mistress Antoinette Huguenin asked, and her tone was as cold as had been the references to me in her late letters from France. "I wish you joy, Captain, and I'll warrant that you have chosen a lady with a most gentle temper. For if report be true you love only women who smile and answer 'yea' to you always."

There sounded a cry from the man on watch, and, looking, we saw a tiny fleck of canvas—

scarce larger than a man's thumb nail—against the blue of the horizon a little sou' of sou'east. We watched it grow until the stretch of sails and the shape of the ship that bore them could plainly be distinguished.

"Touch off your culverin," Morgan cried to the gunner. "'Tis our consort and I would have her message."

Then came the thunder of the gun. We waited. Far, far off like an echo came our answer. One, then another, and another, until there had sounded five.

"'Tis as I feared," Morgan said, and for a moment there was sadness, almost despondency in his voice and manner. "I am a fugitive, Captain Middleton. Any man aboard this ship, if he be a loyal subject of King James will see to it that I do not escape beyond the reach of his heavy hand."

"I trust there be none such on board, your Honor," I answered him. "Will you put yourself into the hands of your crew?"

"I will put myself on board my buccaneer," he answered with a grim smile. "I will sail into the harbor of your city, send you ashore in the long boat, and sail out again, giving Governor Moreton scant time to order us fired upon, even did he know an outlaw aboard this packet. My purpose is neither to hang in the

iron cage of Augustine, nor be stretched on the rack in Spain. I return to my brotherhood and will sail again under the black flag against the Spaniards of the New World."

"I almost have it in my mind to go with you," I cried, speaking in all sincerity.

He laughed, looked towards Mistress Antoinette Huguenin, then laughed again, and I felt the hot blood burning in my face.

"Pish! man," he cried. "I doubt if the fear of King James' darkest dungeon, the burning rack of Spain or death itself could make you forego one hour of her company now that you know she loves you. You have passed unpleasant hours, but you receive a reward that the Grand Monarque himself might envy, even in his palmiest days."

We sailed into the bay, up the wide river, and once more came in sight of the city for which my heart had so often longed, and which I had more than once despaired of ever seeing again. Through the glasses, I spied upon the two houses that I knew so well, surrounded by their palisades and in the midst of their growing fields. I made out a company of slaves working on both plantations, and even fancied that I could distinguish Colonel Huguenin acting as his own overseer. I handed the glasses to Mistress Antoinette.

"You will see one you know," I told her.

"Yes," she said after she had gazed long and carefully. "I recognize many of my father's slaves and some few of your own; but my father is not there."

"Not there?" I cried, for I had been so sure.

"No, he is not there," she answered, "and my heart forbodes evil."

"Then he is at Charleston, or he may be in the house," I assured her, though in my heart I felt not the security that my words implied. "There are a dozen places where he might be, not expecting your arrival."

"'Tis not because I do not find him with the slaves," she cried. "But it is the look of the fields, the gardens, the house itself. He has not been there, at least not for many weeks. My heart misgives me for his safety."

"'Tis his uneasiness for you that makes him neglectful," I said, trying hard to give her consolation even while my own heart was heavy with dread for what I feared awaited her.

"'Twould but make him work all the harder. He would give himself no idle moments to be harassed by sad thoughts," she answered, and I knew that she spoke the truth. "It is the thought of Augustine—that he has returned there, attempting my rescue. If he should again fall into their hands—" All color left

her face and she seemed as though about to faint from deadly fear.

"Antoinette, Antoinette!" I cried, my heart wrung from my body to see her of whose fortitude and courage I had seen so many proofs, turn sick at the fancies born of her own imaginings. "It cannot be as you fear. Governor Moreton would not let him go without sufficient men at his back."

"Still the fear does not leave me," she answered. "He would not rest in Charleston, thinking me in Augustine, and that thou knowest. They will be on their guard, expecting an attack, and should he be taken or by any means fall into D'Alva's power——"

"I will rescue him. That I'll swear," I cried. And so I purposed even though it should cost me my life and the exit should be by way of the iron cage of Augustine or the rack of Spain.

"An you do," she said, the red coming back into her face, and her beautiful eyes meeting mine with all the modest sincerity of her sweet womanliness, "there is naught I will not give thee."

I bent my knee and rested first my lips, then my forehead against the hand that she stretched forth.

"There is but one boon that I can ask," I told her.

I rose to my feet and led her forward to meet the buccaneer Admiral who was returning from the ordering of his crew. Mistress Moreton and Marcie had gone below to make ready for leaving the ship.

"All that you did, Mistress Huguenin, save one thing only, I countenance," Morgan cried, as he joined us. "That you spent your own and Captain Middleton's share of booty in freeing engagés, from their term of service, I think good. But the gold that you gave the Spanish prisoners, whom Bras de Fer had orders to put ashore near Havana, I think ill spent. It will not serve the women, but instead will go to the sleek priests who, as you know, hold place in my affections even higher than other Spaniards. An I mistake not ye love them no better yourself, yet it was thy humor to save their lives, and let them go scot free, and with well filled purses to boot. Women are as mysterious as the sea, Captain Middleton, and the older men grow the more thoroughly they become convinced that they are past their understanding."

"And like the sea our mystery lies in our simplicity," Antoinette told him. "Men fail to understand us because they look below the surface for occurrences that have their cause on the outside. 'Twas because they were women and

men of God that I so shielded them; I had no deeper reason."

"And since it was thy humor, I let it pass," he answered. "I return you to your father with but one regret in my heart—that I cannot claim you as my own child. 'Tis as my own daughter I have sought to shield you from the gossip of idle tongues, and for that I planned your unmasking at the feast in the great tribunal. That you sailed mate of a pirate ship should cause you no blushes. By no other means could you have saved your honor and protected the women who went with you."

As we stood on deck waiting for the finishing of the last few preparations for our landing Mistress Moreton again urged his stopping in Charleston, and assured him of the protection of her husband.

"I kiss thy hand, lady," he cried. "But never will I so embarrass a man as honest as thy husband. As the Governor of Carolina, sworn to enforce the laws and commands of King James, it would be his duty to apprehend me. As thy husband I know that the dictates of his heart would make him traitor to his trust. That must not be." Turning to Antoinette he kissed the hand she extended to him. Then, slipping on her finger a ring set with a blood red ruby, he said: "Should you be in trouble

by land or by sea, and need a friend, send me this ring, my child. If I am alive and free from prison chains I will surely come to thee."

Again he kissed her hand, and we took our places in the boat and left him standing in the deepening dusk, gazing after us.

The entrance of the packet into the harbor had caused no great commotion as the smallness of the crowd assembled on the wharf to watch our landing proved. When I clambered up the steep stairs leading to the wooden wharf, the dusk and the thin mist that was beginning to rise, made the faces into which I gazed appear as though covered by a grey veil. They were only the slaves of some few who lived near the water's edge and one gentleman who apparently had stopped in passing, expecting the landing of some few foreign sailors and a petty sea-officer.

"The Governor?" I questioned of the gentleman, as I turned from helping the two ladies and their serving woman up the steps made slippery by the wash of the incoming tide. "Is he to be found so late in the great house?"

"Yea, sir," he answered, motioning the slave who followed him to take the bundle that I carried. "I will act as your guide, if you have no better. Though past the usual hour for au-

dience with strangers the Governor will see you for he denies himself to no man however humble. Would you first go to the guest house?" he asked, looking at the two ladies and their serving woman.

"No, friend," I told him, still keeping up the cheat though I had recognized him as one Owen, a small merchant who had but recently come from the Old World. "I would first pay my respects to your Governor, and since you describe him as so amiable, the ladies will go with me."

"Our Governor has suffered a great grief," he told me after a short silence in which we had continued on our way, Antoinette walking at my side with Mistress Moreton, Marcie and the slave following us. "He has just lost his wife, a most estimable lady to whom he was wed scarce a year ago."

"She died in Charleston?" I questioned, hoping to get news of the city.

"No," he answered. "It had been better so a thousand times for then at least he would have known the manner and cause of her death. She was taken captive from the city of Augustine by pirates and no news has since come from her, or ever will to my thinking. We all know the fate of women so taken."

"Was she alone? Had she no friend with her?" I asked.

"Yea," he answered, "and that is the saddest part of the sad story. There was taken with her Mistress Antoinette Huguenin, who had but recently returned to this colony. She was a famous beauty of King Louis' court, and her lover, a rich and powerful French nobleman, has but just arrived here, having obtained permission from the king to claim her hand in marriage."

At the mention of the Frenchman I felt the fingers that I clasped tighten their hold and I grasped them more firmly.

"He has taken no steps towards her rescue?" I asked.

"'Tis but three days since he arrived," he answered. "Now the ship in which he came lies in the harbor being more heavily armed, and he spends hours each day in consultation with the Governor and his council. 'Tis known that they purpose an expedition, though where or against whom has not yet transpired. The Duc de Richelieu is a most noble looking young gallant, and 'tis said that he lets not the grass grow under his feet. Would you have me announce you, sir?" he asked as he stopped before the door of the Governor's mansion.

"No," I told him, as I turned to mount the steps. "I have been here, though before Governor Moreton's time."

I bade him good-night, thanking him for his trouble and entered the open door. As we passed into the wide hall lighted by flaming lightwood torches, a black serving man in the Governor's livery, came forward to meet us.

"Caleb," I said, "conduct your mistress and Mademoiselle Huguenin to some room where they can rest. I would prepare your master for their coming."

He started back; stared at us wildly with eyes that seemed starting from their sockets; then fell on his knees and raising his clasped hands appealingly, tried to form words that fell unintelligibly from his shaking lips. I strode towards him hoping by roughness to cure him of his fright, but he moved back, still on his knees, with his hands held in supplication, until, finding that I gained on him, he whirled his body over, and fled from the hall on all fours, with the agility of a wild monkey in the forest.

"Doan' pay no heed to dat nigger, Mas' Jack," Marcie cried. It was the first time that I had heard the sound of her voice since seeing her aboard the pirate ship. "He tinks you is de debbil, and we alls is ghosts. I jes take de

ladies in one of dese yere rooms and wait tel you fin' de gub'ner. Come wid me, honey," she said, putting her arm around Mistress Moreton, who, now that fortitude seemed no longer necessary, was weeping hysterically.

I saw the door of the room close upon them; then I turned and went in search of the Governor. I came upon him in the same room in which less than three months gone I had found Governor Quarry and his counsellors. He was alone with his clerk and they were so deep in the examination of some papers that they did not hear me enter. I noticed that Moreton looked pale and haggard, that his beard was longer, and that he was much thinner than when I had last seen him.

I stopped at his side and placed my hand on his shoulder. He turned his head as though expecting to see some trusted friend. When his gaze rested on me his face went deathly white, the smile froze on his lips and turned to a ghastly grin, his eyes became glazed and staring as the dead.

"Governor Moreton," I cried, strengthening my grasp on his shoulder. "I beg that you control yourself. You are a strong man and a brave gentleman."

"Yea," he answered through ashen lips. "I was, Captain Middleton, I was. But now—

since my trouble—and we thought you dead. You are not dead—man?"

"No," I answered, holding his eyes with mine. "I am alive, and you are awake and in your right mind. You see that I am no dead man. I bring you tidings. Do you hear? Can you understand?"

"Yes," he answered. "I understand. And your tidings?"

"My tidings are good, only good. Your wife is alive."

"Alive," he repeated.

"Alive and well. Canst hear what I say, man?" I cried. "As well as when she was taken from you. Dost hear?"

He removed his hand from his head and gazed into my eyes to judge of the truth of that which I told him.

"She is well," I repeated. "And here in this house."

"Here!" he cried, the color coming back into his face and the lustre into his eyes. "You said that she was well and in this house?"

"Yes," I told him, loosening my hold on his shoulders. "She is well and is coming to you."

I gave the signal agreed upon and Marcie led her in. Then we turned and going out closed the door behind us leaving them together.

I followed the black woman into the room where sat Mistress Antoinette Huguenin, leaving the clerk in the hall within reach of the Governor's voice. I went over to her whom I loved above all the world and taking her hand as it rested upon the arm of her chair, pressed the slender fingers to my lips.

"My father, Jack! What of my father?" she asked, turning upon me eyes in which only the deepest dread was written.

I told her of all that had passed between me and the Governor, and tried to console her by reasoning away her fears as founded only on her fancies.

"I have not a man's power to reason," she said, "but I have a boding heart, and since I know thee safe, Jack, it must be my father. I have none else, Jack, thee and my father."

I took her hands and kissed them, and bowed my head upon them. "I love thee," I told her, "and would shield thee even from unhappy thoughts."

"I know that thou dost love me," she answered. "I learned it in Augustine, on board the pirate, in the buccaneer city, and the knowledge made the part I played less galling to my womanhood." I felt her frame tremble and her voice was almost a sob. "But I am also beloved by my father, thou knowest how dearly,

Jack. I am all that he has and he is no longer young. I must not fail him."

Then I heard the clerk's voice summoning us to the Governor, and kissing her hands again, I led her into the great room, where sat the Governor and his lady.

"I owe you a heavy debt, Mademoiselle," he said bending his knee as he kissed her hand, and I saw that tears stood in both his own and his wife's eyes, "more than I can ever hope to pay."

She received his thanks graciously, answered all his questions and smiled at his praise of her wit and courage, though I saw there was but one thought in her mind, but one question trembling on her lips, and for fear of the reply she would receive I dreaded to have her speak.

"You come at a fortunate time, lady," he said at length. "For there is one in Charleston to whom your safety will mean more than to others, even your best friends. The Duc de Richelieu arrived in this city three days gone and bears a message to you from the King of France."

"King Louis has ever proved my kind master, but I like not his messenger, Governor Moreton," she told him, and I saw the same expression creep into her eyes as had shone there when, as a haughty, dare-devil court gallant

she had defied the pirate on board the captured galleon. Then the haughtiness faded, and she asked in a voice trembling with emotion, "I crave news of my father. Is he safe and well, sir?"

The Governor's eyes shifted and he looked at his wife as one seeking an ally. "He is not here, lady," he answered. "But I have every reason to believe that he is safe and well."

"Not here!" she cried.

"No," he said. "After his return, a few days before we had news of your falling into the hands of the pirates, a warrant came from the proprietors, signed by King James himself, ordering me to furnish the Spaniards at Augustine a guide into the Choctaw country and to their great village——"

"You did it?" I cried, and reading the answer in his face, exclaimed, "Great God!"

"And to deliver your father to the Governor of Augustine to answer for the killing of the elder D'Alva," he continued.

"And you let them take him?" she questioned.

"I was forced to it by my Governor's oath."

"Yet I served not your wife so," she cried, and there was the ring of passionate indignation in her voice. "I left her not in the hands of her enemies."

The Governor's eyes dropped before her gaze and a purple red, the shadow of deepest shame, crept up to cheeks and brow. He moistened his dry lips as though about to speak, when she interrupted him.

"I beg you forgive me, Governor Moreton," she said, her voice expressing the deepest contrition. "It was but my hasty tongue, speaking that which my heart does not second. There are some wounds whose sting goes deep, and I love my father dearly. For the sake of that love I pray you forgive my woman's tongue. I know it was but the sternest duty that made you deliver my father into the hands of his enemies, as it was as plainly my own to lead your wife out."

Then she turned to me, extending a hand that did not shake, and her voice had lost the unevenness of emotion. "Captain Middleton," she said, "the promise you gave me aboard King James' packet! I claim its fulfillment."

"GOVERNOR MORETON tells me that your Grace comes a messenger from King Louis to both my father and myself."

She stood before a window in the great council room of the Governor's house, and the rays of the early morning sun that penetrated the vine-covered trellis outside fell in bright splashes on the flowing draperies of her white muslin gown. Her cheeks were colorless and the heavy dark circles under her eyes made them appear even larger and brighter than was their wont. The Governor and his lady sat together at one side of the council table; I leaned against the mantel; the secretary stood near me; while his Grace the Duc de Richelieu was facing her, but across the table.

"An it please your Grace I would hear the king's message," she said.

"His Majesty did but grant my earnest prayer, Mademoiselle," his Grace answered, and bowing low he approached her with the

mincing gait peculiar to King Louis and his courtiers. He extended a packet, tied with silk and bearing the royal seal of France. "He graciously writ yourself and your father expressing approbation of my suit."

She curtesied low, and receiving the packet from his hand, broke the seal, opened it and read. The color crept up into her face, dyeing her cheeks and brow blood-red. The curve of her lips straightened, and when she raised her eyes from the written sheet they were very bright.

"Your Grace made the king believe that I loved you?"

There was naught of maiden shamefacedness in her expression or manner. The very fact she could so publicly discuss her love proved that such a passion did not exist, and even a blind man would have read it from the tone of her voice. The Duke of Richelieu's face went crimson and then paled.

"Mademoiselle!" he cried, and his voice was sharp with pain as that of a man brought to a sudden halt by some great shock, "'twas myself I cheated as well as the king, if you love me not. For on my honor I swear, in my heart, I did believe that you were not indifferent to me. You were the one woman in the whole world that I rated above coquetry."

His voice and manner lacked not dignity and his earnestness made him forget the mannerisms common in his class. He appeared every inch a man and a nobleman. In my heart I pitied him, for I saw that his was no idle fancy but the passion of a sincere man. He had pinned his faith to a woman's constancy and with what results his words declared. Though she whom he reproached was the woman I loved above all the world, there arose in my breast a mighty bitterness against her, that she should have so deceived any man as to make him follow her around the world to find out that she had but used him to while away an idle hour or to gratify her childish vanity. A doubt even of the sincerity of the love she had acknowledged for me arose in my mind, mocking, and jeering at me. I turned my eyes from his face to hers and found it as pale as when she had first entered the room. Her eyes met mine and I think she read in them my distrust.

"I am no coquette," she answered him hotly. "Nor have I ever done aught that could warrant any one, man or woman, accuse me as such. On what did your Grace found the assumption that I loved you? I never told you so."

"No," he replied. "You never told me so, but there are other signs more potent than

words, Mademoiselle, by which men are wont to judge of a woman's feelings and which it now appears held as little meaning to you as to the most experienced coquette of King Louis' court. You were but a child when I first saw and loved you, and you fluttered away from my approaches as some timid bird from a snare. I saw the beautiful girl blossom into exquisite womanhood, and was jealous because I knew that there were others who watched; other hands stretching out to pluck the flower I longed to claim as my own. I wooed you as ardently as I dared; for I saw what others did not, that the impassioned words and expressions that won the meaner beauties at court repulsed your innocence. That I grew to think you loved me was no foolish fancy of a lovesick brain, for others saw and envied me what they, I with them, named my luck. When, sure of your interest I would have spoken to your grandaunt, but I was called to the country by the illness of my father, as you know, Mademoiselle, and returned to find you come to America. I thought you but did it to try the quality of my love, and followed you in the next ship leaving France. If in truth you love me not, Mademoiselle, I beg that you doubt not the honor of the love that I gave you. You granted me more favors than other men at court, and

believing you sincere I assured King Louis that you loved me."

"You say that I granted your Grace more favors than other men at court," she cried, her face flushing crimson though there was no shame in her eyes. "I deny it not, for I thought you loved me and I rated you a gentleman and true. But when I found that you had made another to love you—a woman as good and pure as myself, my lord of Richelieu—I turned from you, thanking God that the love which you had won from me was but the dawn of a great passion. I love you not, your Grace, nor ever can. Go you back to France and wed the girl whose heart you won. Though I loved you an hundred times more than the gentleman to whom I have given my heart, I would not claim you for I could not so dishonor a sister woman."

"'Twas pain that caused me first to turn to her. 'Twas when I first told you of my love and you laughed me to scorn," he said, extending his hands towards her in passionate appeal. For the moment at least I knew he forgot that he had other listeners besides the woman whose heart he now realized he had so nearly won. "Then, later, when you began to show me favor, yet still were cold, I thought by jealousy to arouse in you some passion answering to that which was consuming me."

"Your Grace misjudged me," she told him, and I thought the note of self-vindication that had sounded in her voice was turned to scorn. "'Twas a man in whose nobleness I had unbounded faith, whom I believed above deceit, that I loved. But when I found that your Grace was not such a man——" she put out her hands as though parting some heavy drapery that had hung about her, and her voice was tremulous with emotion—"I was young—" and though she turned towards the Governor and his lady, I knew that she was addressing me—"with all of a lonely girl's craving for something on which to bestow her love. I do not say the wound was painless, for, beside the shattering of the idol that had existed only in my own girlish fancy, there was somewhat of wounded vanity.

"But that idol shattered, that wound healed," she continued, turning back towards the Duke, "there still remains enough of tenderness for that which is past to make me beg that you do not destroy the faith which I still would hold in your honor to women. The girl whom you wooed secretly loves your Grace truly. She is your own kinswoman and in every way worthy of your rank and great name. Make her your wife and give her the love which you have taught her to believe in. Then will I find

it in my heart to believe that you purposed neither of us wrong. That 'twas but your man's vanity that did for the time overshadow the true nobleness of your nature."

"'Tis no easy task you set me, Mademoiselle," he answered, after a time, his face working with an emotion that he sought in vain to conceal. "Yet mayhap some day I may do as you wish; for, so great is my love for you, that I would at least prove myself worthy of your good thoughts."

"Then will your Grace return at once to France," she told him.

"To France?" he cried. "You are in trouble, Mademoiselle, and I beg that you deny me not the honor of lending you what small aid lies in my power. Your father is in the hands of the Spaniards and though you love me not, lady, I would know you happy."

"Then indeed your Grace has a noble heart, and I have not words with which to express my gratitude," she answered, her voice a tremble and her lashes heavy with tear drops. "Still it is to France that I would have you go. King James is a sworn friend and ally to the King of Spain, and an enemy to all Protestants. Governor Moreton rests under orders from the proprietors and cannot raise hand or foot in behalf of my father, so there is

none else to whom I can turn, save King Louis."

His Grace looked at Moreton.

"'Tis as Mistress Antoinette has said, your Grace," the Governor assured him. "Every man leaving the colony to undertake the rescue of Colonel Huguenin will be guilty of treason against the king and as such it is my duty to arrest and punish him, and, besides, do all that lies in my power to thwart his purpose."

"Then will you not return with me to France, Mademoiselle?" he asked, turning again towards her. "Your lightest word will have more weight with our Grand Monarque than——"

"That were impossible, your Grace," the Governor interrupted. "The last packet from England brought positive commands to me, as Governor of Carolina, that should Mistress Antoinette Huguenin come again into the province she was to be held—treated with all honor—until King James could be notified and express his pleasure as to her disposal through the proprietors."

"Even before your Grace has reached France," Antoinette said turning towards Richelieu, "I, as well as my father, may be in the hands of the Spaniard at Augustine, to answer for the death of D'Alva."

"No! no! not that, Antoinette!" Mistress Moreton cried. She left her chair at the Governor's side and, crossing over, threw her arms around the girl. "They shall not send thee back to Augustine. Thou wouldst not permit that, Joseph?" and she turned to her husband for reassurance.

"My love," he answered, moved out of his wonted composure by her distress. "Thou wouldst have me—"

"I would have thee give up thy Governor's warrant, defy the lord proprietors and their wicked king if needs be, but not to stain thy soul with the blood of an innocent girl," she cried. Her blue eyes were bright, crimson spots burned on either cheek and her mild and gentle voice trembled with passion. "An thou couldst be forced to give her into the hands of the Spaniards, knowing the fate they purpose for her, Joseph, and her faithfulness to me, then could I not live another day as thy—"

"Then would I, indeed, be most miserable," Antoinette broke in, interrupting Mistress Moreton. "If thou lovest me and valuest what small service it has been in my power to render thee, I beg that thy effort be combined with mine to make more easy thy husband's task should it become his duty as Governor of Carolina to do that which I know the dictates of his

heart would have him refuse. But before that time comes it is my hope that the influence of my friends in France will have been felt at the English court."

"If it has not, there remain always your friends in Hispaniola," I told her, passing to her side and taking her hand between both my own. "Your father and mother set us the example, Antoinette."

She looked in my eyes and reading my meaning the blood swept a rich crimson to her cheeks and brow. Her lids drooped and her eyes shifted towards the open window near which the Governor still sat. Suddenly she started and her fingers closed convulsively over mine.

"'Twas Cayman!" she said, in a startled whisper, clinging all the closer to my hand. "He stood against the window looking in."

"Your eyes deceived you," Mistress Moreton told her, after we had looked from every window and the clerk had returned from his search of the yards, reporting that no one had been seen by the servants. "Your thoughts were on Hispaniola and the Spaniards and you caught a fancied likeness in the face of some man passing on the streets who chanced to look in."

"He was not in the street, but against the window and for a moment I looked into his

eyes," Antoinette insisted. Then her tone changed and she said, "Mayhap I was mistaken. My eyes often play me strange tricks. It must have been as you say, only a fancied resemblance of some one passing in the streets."

"No, Mademoiselle," his Grace of Richelieu exclaimed. "There was a man at the window, that I'll swear, for I saw his face so distinctly that I noted a deep scar over his left brow. Had your Cayman such a scar?"

My eyes met those of Mistress Moreton. We both knew that scar. Antoinette had turned to the window and to all appearances did not hear Richelieu's question. Again my eyes met those of Mistress Moreton, and reading a startled question in their depths I left the room saying that I would go and question the servants. I went to the strip of sward under the window and found what I expected, the print of a man's great boot on the parched grass. I called to the clerk, and, together, we followed the track to the side of the house wherein were the sleeping rooms of the family. Then it led into the street, and was lost.

Returning to the great room I found the ladies gone. Mistress Antoinette had retired to her room with a headache; the Governor was deep in consultation with his wife's father and two of his council who had arrived during

my absence, while his Grace of Richelieu stood at a window looking out toward the sea, his forehead knotted into a heavy frown and God knows with what bitterness in his heart.

Cautioning the servants to watch against the coming of a strange man, I left the house and went into the city upon other affairs. I rode down the river to my own and Huguenin's estate, then returned to town and to a meeting with friends at the tavern. It was good dusk when, leaving the public house in company with Master John Hughes, on the way to the Governor's house we met two strangers hastening down the street towards the town gate. The great height and powerful build of the one who walked nearest us caused me to turn and look after them when they had passed. It was too dark to distinguish their faces and they had given us no greeting, yet as I watched them their figures seemed strangely familiar. The tall one appeared a very giant in size and though he strode down the street at a gait that soon took him beyond our gaze, the youth who walked with him appeared the leader, so well did he hold his one pace in advance.

"They hasten to pass the gate before the night guard comes on and it closes for the night," Master Hughes said, as we watched the two men until their figures were swallowed up

by the gloom under the trees. We turned and went on our way. "They were strangers from the Dutch settlement up the river, doubtless," he ventured.

"Then they would have returned by way of the river," I told him.

"So they would, so they would," he replied, rubbing the stubble beard on his chin. "Though if they come not from there I would know them, and I tell you, Captain, that there is not a man in the settlements down the river nor inland that could touch the ears of that giant."

"We are no longer a small settlement, Hughes," I said, "and strangers coming back and forth among us makes it well nigh impossible to remember faces."

We returned to our former conversation, discussing the treachery of Master Bernard Schinking who, I had learned, had offered himself as guide for the Spaniards into the country of the Choctaws.

"Had the Governor ordered his services," Hughes exclaimed, "then could I have excused his lack of faith to the people, savages though they are, who have ever treated him as friend. But when the Governor calling on meaner men finally found one to consent to do the king's bidding, then Schinking stepped forth and of-

fered himself, as well acquainted with both the country and the village."

"His service ended, did he purpose returning to Carolina?" I asked.

"That I cannot tell you," he answered. "But I know that he has always traded between the Indians and the buccaneers as is now well proved, and should he return I question not that 'twould be to meet a warrant. Moreton is no lover of such unlawful traffic, as is well known, and all that has been made by it since he came into office is not worth a devil's fetching."

"If Schinking returns," I told him as we separated, "I would see the man, for I have a long standing score to settle;" I remembered that it was to me that he owed the knowledge of which he was now making such base use.

Mounting the steps to the Governor's house, I pushed open the heavy door and entering the hall came face to face with Mistress Moreton and Marcie. The lady was white and trembling; the black woman was an ashy grey, with eyes stretched as big as saucers. They stared at me as at a ghost and I at them dumbfounded.

"Mistress Moreton," I exclaimed, at last gaining control of my tongue, "what is it? What has so startled you?"

She pointed up the stairs and whispered hoarsely, "She is not there."

"Not there?" I repeated, failing to catch her meaning. "Who is not there?" But as the words passed my lips, my heart answered. "Antoinette!" I called, striding towards the steps.

"She is not there, Mass Jack," Marcie said, laying hold of my sleeve. "I saw her climb from de winder. She wore her men's clothes, and there was a man who received her in de yard."

"A man?" I questioned, too dazed to think. Then a thought entered my dulled brain. "Richelieu," I cried.

She shook her head. "'Twas the pirate, de young giant who knew her to be a 'oman," Marcie replied.

WITHOUT a word I strode out of the house and going to the Governor's stable ordered the negro groom to let me in. There was a sorrel stallion in the last stall. It had been brought over from Flanders the year before when scarce more than a colt, by Moreton, and was known to be the swiftest and best winded beast in the colony. I led him out. The negro threw the saddle on his back, I sprang into it and turned his head towards the town gate.

I was none too soon for the watch was changing. The man who had held guard since noon was in the act of leaving as I galloped up. He who had just come on surlily ordered my halt, until flashing his light into my face he saluted and began to mumble apologies.

"'Tis nigh time to close, Captain Middleton," he exclaimed, as he withdrew the bolts and pushed open the heavy door for my passage. "Blessing would—"

"The two strangers who passed out," I in-

terrupted, calling to his fellow Blessing Mitchell, who had but just turned away, "did they go up or down river, or walk across country?"

Both men stared at me until I well-nigh lost patience, then they exchanged glances and Blessing cried out: "'Cross country, Captain. Straight out over the road to New Jamestown, but they did not walk."

"Not walk!" I cried, checking my horse, who had begun to move.

"No, sir, and we were just talking about them when you galloped up. They strode through the gate hardly giving a man time to tell the color of their skins. The little one in the lead and doing the talking. 'Good evening, friends,' he gave us, as they walked up—but without once slackening pace—'we are but just in time to save you the trouble of drawing bolts, and the Governor signing a warrant. Step lively, Goliath. Put springs into thy great feet, else they will shut the gate on thy very nose, and give the town folks the rare sport of seeing thee draw thy great body over the palisades.' And they were out and striding across the commons, mounting their horses before we scarce had time to draw breath."

"Mounting their horses?" I questioned, amazed, for this was something of which I had not thought.

"Yea, sir," Blessing answered. "When they passed out, as I was telling you, I looked after them and saw two horses led to meet them from the forest to the left, by another man almost as tall as Goliath. The two who had passed through the gate mounted and rode over the old road toward New Jamestown, and the other fellow struck down the path across the meshes. I bethought that they were not—"

I did not wait for further parley but giving rein to the stallion, dug my heels into his flanks, and he sprang snorting through the gate and swept down the shell covered road across the commons.

The moon had not yet risen, and the thick branches overhead shut out the dim light of the stars as I galloped along the road leading through the forest. The fireflies shone around me as brilliant as stars in the blackness. I heard the call of a whippoorwill, and the half uttered answer of his mate hushed into silence by the sound of my horse's feet. Some wild creature, a fox or, perhaps, a panther, rushed across my path, and halting among the trees glared back with eyes like living coals. I felt the fan of its wings as a great night hawk flew over my head, heard the unearthly call of a hoot owl and the demoniacal laugh with which it was answered by its less distant mate, smelt

the aroma of wild thyme crushed beneath my horse's feet, and the sickly perfume of a night-blooming jasmine. Patches of light appeared on the white sand of the road, and I knew that the moon had at last climbed above the horizon. I could distinguish the trees under which I passed, the outlines of my horse's head and his foam-covered shoulders. His eyes rolled white and staring as he strained through the deep powder-like sand.

All this I noted, but the thoughts that crowded on my brain and wrung my heart were past the telling. The scene in the Governor's council room was still fresh in my memory. The words of the French nobleman that proved at least Antoinette's encouragement of his suit, her reason given for her change of heart, that in other women would have served but to make them more fond. Doubtless she would not lack a reason just as good when it came my time to stand in the place of Richelieu and reproach her for inconstancy. That she had not been forced away from the Governor's house I had the witness of my own eyes to give credence to the words of the men at the gate. 'Twas her own will and how did I know that it was not of her own planning. Then a shameless hussy of a thought entered my mind, winking and mocking me. Bras de Fer had known her

woman and she had sailed his mate. I called to mind her unwonted docility at the hocksing and his too evident emotion at the feast. Would he have been so moved had she not given him some undoubted sign of her favor? That they had not met publicly the day following the feast and had sailed in different ships, I very well knew, but who was wise enough to say what had passed unknown to others? She was a woman of quick wit and knew not the feeling of fear. She had come of a long line of valiant men and virtuous women but—she had been reared in King Louis' court.

Going in great bounds like a rabbit my horse dashed out of the gloom of the forest, into the calm brilliancy of a full moon. Clear against the sky and on the top of a little hillock near a quarter of a mile ahead, rode the two I followed—the smaller full two lengths in the lead. I dug my unspurred heels into the stallion's flanks and leaned far over his shoulders, but took not my gaze for one instant from the slender figure riding so gallantly. She turned in her saddle and the moonlight fell on her face as she looked back. I held my breath hard, but it made no change in her riding and I remembered with a gasp of relief that I rode in the bottoms and below the natural range of her gaze. Her horse was doing its best and

once I caught the sound of her voice—whether in encouragement or taunts I could not distinguish—urging on the great creatures, man and beast, that followed her.

They topped the hill and were hidden from view. Again I dug my heels into my beast and urged him on. The smell and breath of the sea struck my face as we toiled to the top of the hill. I rose in my stirrups in my efforts to see ahead. I reached the top and looked down. The growing fields of Master Schinking lay before me. His house in its palisades to the left, his tobacco sheds and storehouses on the right and nearer to where stretched the sea, its water gleaming like molten silver in the moonlight. Through the tobacco fields, half hidden by the growing plants, moved the two I sought.

They reached the shed and disappeared from view. I pushed on urging my panting beast to do his utmost. Once in the field I drew rein, proceeding more cautiously towards I knew not what. Turning the corner of the shed the beach stretched before me, and laying high up above the wash of the waves was a long boat, and, a few paces off, another. The realization that there were two ships came to me suddenly and caused me to glance out towards the deep bay which I knew to be hidden behind the narrow neck

of land, half expecting to see their masts rising above the dark forest. Though I did not find them I was none the less certain that they were there. The two horses stood fastened within the shed and I tied my own near them. There was no human being in sight, but the red gleam of torchlight from the crack in the storehouse made me know where to look.

The house was of rough palmetto logs chinked with clay which, owing to the heat of the summer, had fallen out in many places leaving holes through which a man might have thrust his arm to the shoulder. It was through one of these openings that I peered, and came near crying aloud from that which met my gaze.

Master Bernard Schinking sat on an upturned box drawn toward the middle of the room. At his elbow, standing one foot upon the same box, was Sir Henry Morgan.

Bras de Fer and others of the pirates stood against the wall or sat on boxes and barrels, while the one who had sailed amongst them as Count Uldric Huguenin stood facing the two in the middle of the room. She leaned against a tobacco hogshead, her arms crossed on its top, her figure more than half concealed by it.

"They did not torture him in Augustine?" was the first words that struck my ears.

"No, Mademoiselle," Bernard Schinking answered. "That will come at Chagres, for I am told that there they are as well supplied with all instruments of torture as hell itself or the Inquisition in Spain."

"And the great war-chief of the Choctaws, was he also spared torture?" Antoinette questioned, and her voice showed as great concern as when she asked about her father.

"Nay, they tended him as their own brother," he replied with a chuckling laugh of bitter derision. "Such is their Spanish humanity. Lumulgee was wounded unto death, but if he lives not through the voyage to Chagres 'twill not be for lack of tender care. He will have naught but gentle treatment against the time when his wounds heal and he can serve as sport for them in their torture chamber."

"You saw him in Augustine?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle, but only when he was put aboard the ship with your father. Had I made request to see him my life had been in jeopardy, for then might they have suspected the sincerity of my hate for all Indians, and the mystery of the Choctaws being warned,

and their own troops led into ambush been more easily unraveled. I was but one of the crowd that went to gaze upon him as they bore him from his dungeon to the ship that was to carry him to their more southern stronghold. He was conscious and saw me. Two days later I took passage in a merchantman touching at Jamaica, from which port I was brought here by the captain of the Phœnix, with whom I had had some small acquaintance. If the Admiral purposes to go against Chagres, to the rescue of your father and the war-chief, I go with him."

There was a moment's silence, then Morgan lifted his head.

"Such is my determination and I would sail within the hour," he said. "The Spaniard at Augustine has drawn heavily on both the garrisons of Chagres and Panama, and I would strike before they have time to reinforce."

"For what purpose did he draw off the garrisons of Chagres and Panama, Sir Henry?" Antoinette asked, and I strained my ears for his answer.

"To sack the temple, Mademoiselle," Schinking answered, when Morgan had looked at him to reply. "The galleon in which your father was taken to Chagres brought troops from

Havana, and others were hourly expected from the two southern fortresses. D'Alva leads a great army into the Choctaw country, and as he holds their war-chief and knows that many of his braves are killed, he has high hopes of success. He will need no guide this time save only the bleaching bones of those who followed him in his first attempt at robbery."

"Is there no one to warn the Choctaws?" Antoinette asked, her voice trembling with indignant emotion. "They are friendly to the English and it was for them that they went against Augustine."

"They have been warned, Mistress Antoinette," Morgan answered her. "You may trust Master Schinking for so much wit. But as I know the policy of the proprietors of Carolina and your Governor, they will be left to defend their own treasures as best they can against the Spaniards. King James is too anxious to pleasure the court of Spain to lift his hand in defence of his Indian allies. 'Tis for your father and Lumulgee that we go against the Spanish stronghold on the southern continent, and mayhap we will give them revenge for that which they plan against the Choctaws in some small measure."

"Aye, aye," was the muttered response of the

pirates that traveled around the room. "They will have no quarter, save only those who can give good ransom."

"There is one man in Charleston whom I would have sail with us, Bras de Fer," Schinking said, speaking directly to the giant. "And I doubt not he would be blithe to go to the rescue of his old friend. I would that Captain Middleton sailed with us. 'Twas with him that I went against Augustine and I know the quality of his metal. He loves your father, lady, and there is none in Charleston who would do more to serve him. I wish that you could have brought him here with you, Master Captain."

"Captain Middleton is here." It was Antoinette's voice and her eyes turned to the side of the house from which I spied. "He is without, Sir Henry. If you will order the door opened he can speak for himself."

Thus finding myself detected I passed around the corner of the house, to stand face to face with the pirate of the pezos earbobs. He grinned at my surprise and said as he stepped aside:

"I stood on guard, Captain, for the young court gallant told me that I was not to show myself to you but let you follow your humor. They have unbarred the door, sir; would you pass within?"

I felt the blood burn red in my face when I stepped within the door and met the questioning in more than one pair of eyes. Morgan's face was sterner than was his wont when he gazed on a friend.

"You are welcome in our council, Captain Middleton," he cried, though he made no move for further greeting. "I lead my buccaneers against Chagres for the rescue of Colonel Huguenin and Lumulgee, and would be loath to leave behind so good a soldier as yourself, if you would go with us."

"I should be loath to stay behind, Sir Henry," I answered him none too courteously, "though 'tis but chance that has led me to learn of it."

"Nay, sir," he answered, "Cayman could not gain speech with you this morning in your city, and I missed you later on your estates. Captain Bras de Fer and the surgeon had much ado to fetch young mistress undetected, for your Governor has given warning to all free-booters; and buccaneers no longer pass as honest men and brave Englishmen in your province. If you join with us in this expedition, though it be for the rescue of friends, 'tis at your own peril. You know the Governor's law?"

"Yea," I answered. "I know his law, but I also know my own mind. I will go with you."

"Then 'twere well we went," Bras de Fer exclaimed moving towards the door, "if we would catch the tide of which, unless my calculations fail, there remains less than a quarter of an hour."

"Mistress Huguenin?" I questioned, turning to Morgan, as the other pirates strode with Bras de Fer toward the beach, "she cannot return alone to Charleston."

"I am with my father's trusty slave, who has ever proved my friend and protector, Captain Middleton," she answered coldly, motioning towards the shed, and from the shadow of which stepped out Marcie's husband, the patriarch of her father's plantation. "We will pass the night in the house and behind the palisades of Master Schinking."

"Have you naught to say to me, Antoinette?" I asked, after we had stood a moment in silence and I saw that the men made ready to push off the boats. "You saw that I followed you?"

"Yes," she answered, and her voice had the quality of fine steel, "and know your suspicions against me."

"My suspicions!" I exclaimed, feeling the hot blood surge into my brain and a pain as though a rough hand griped my heart strings.

"Yea," she answered, and her voice was

heavy with sadness. "Hadst thou trusted me, Jack, then wouldst thou have called out, on seeing us as you left the forest. And once here thou wouldst have come boldly to the door claiming admittance and not played the eavesdropper. Didst thou love me, Jack, thou wouldst not distrust me."

"I do love thee, Antoinette," I cried, dropping on my knees and pressing her hand against my brow, my cheeks and my lips. "I swear that I love thee more than woman was ever loved. But I did not understand."

"No, and because thou didst not understand thou couldst not believe. But for the sake of our life's happiness, if God see fit to so bless us, I beg thee to trust me." Never sounded sweeter music in my ears than the note of forgiveness in her voice. "Thou goest to rescue my father, and I cannot tell thee how much of love and gratitude is within my heart. 'Tis on my lips, not on my hand that I would have thee press thy kisses. They may be the last thou may'st ever give me, Jack, and I would carry them to my grave."

THE next day dawned and I looked out upon a laughing sea with eyes that saw its beauty but dully. I did not care for the sunrise except that it brought another day to her whom I had left standing in the moonlight on the edge of the tobacco field above the beach. I thought of her as riding back to Charleston, under the guidance of Marcie's husband, her eyes heavy from much weeping and her thoughts on her father and the lover who had gone to his rescue. Then the vision changed and I saw her ride boldly into the city with a laugh on her lips and tell of my flight to the Governor, declaring my treasonable object and urging Richelieu's return to France, using all the power of her great beauty and her woman's wit in the same madcap daring that I had seen aboard the pirate. Such, I knew, was her metal, though the night before I had left her in a very passion of despair at our parting.

The time that must elapse before we reached Chagres stretched out before me as tedious a voyage to go through as was Elijah's in his forty days' journey to Horeb. Eight days dragged by, then we reached Cape Tiburon, the place chosen for a rendezvous, to lay in stores for the venture. Here our two ships were joined by eight others, large and small, armed with sixteen, fourteen and ten pound guns, and bearing the ransom of a town in wheat and salted meat. Morgan, after personally inspecting each bark, called a council of war in the state room of his flag ship, appointed peculiar signals for all emergencies and divided the fleet into two squadrons. The Admiral's division carried a red banner with a white cross and at the bowsprit a smaller flag of blue, white and red, while the other squadron, which was under the command of Captain Brantley, bore the royal English and a white flag.

At the next sunrise we continued our journey and, three days out, chased two caravels from Cuba; but contrary winds arising they escaped by shallow passages between some small islands and Morgan sent up signals forbidding his captains to follow.

"'Tis my purpose to reach Chagres as soon as our sails can take us, Captain Middleton," he told me when we had watched the signals

pass. "I'll warrant you will not counsel delay."

"No, I will not counsel delay," I answered, "nor, I fear me, quarter to those we find."

"There would be none amongst us to give you obedience if you did," he replied. "To sack Chagres and leave of its grim fortress not one stone upon another has been the desire of buccaneers since first I sailed the high seas. Of the hundreds of our brotherhood who have passed within its walls but one has come out and by an escape that was scarce less than a miracle. 'Twas from him that I had account of their torture chamber and by it reason the fate intended for the two we seek. An we would not find the great War-Chief with his eyes torn from their sockets, and Huguenin's tongue pulled out by the roots, we must make all speed and tarry not."

We did not tarry. Though the hours appeared to creep by at a snail's pace I knew that every heart-beat brought us nearer our destination. The men became busier, more alert under the discipline that grew more strict as we neared our journey's end. At last we came in sight of the great mainland which the Spaniards in their greed sought to hold to the exclusion of all the world. I was on deck when the land

was cried and the Admiral coming from his work in the state cabin stood at my side.

"Captain Brantley sacked a town to victual our fleet, Captain Middleton, and now we will storm yonder fort to obtain a guide," he said, pointing to the fort whose guns guarded the entrance of the bay towards which we sailed and behind which stretched a city of no inconsiderable size. "I have always found that outlaws make the best guides for outlaws, and we will find many such in the prisons of St. Catherine."

"Are you in such sore need of guides," I questioned in surprise, for I saw that the stone batteries that faced us, if resolutely manned, would be able to beat off three such wooden fleets as the one he led.

"Yea," he answered, "we need guides to lead us to Panama and spies to carry the news of our expedition and our object to Chagres. Morgan has again taken to the high seas and comes once more to fill his own coffers, and enrich his pirates from Panama—such is the tale I would have go before us into Chagres, else might the wily dons guess the object of our coming. Then would we find the ones we would rescue sojourners no longer in this world. To-night we anchor in the little bay below the

port of St. Catherine's and at daybreak land and, marching across that range of wooded mountain, attack the city by nightfall."

With three old buccaneers who had harried that coast under Mansvelt as our guides we marched over those mountains and through the dense tangle of tropical forest. There were two hundred picked men and we took no provisions for the march, neither food nor drink—nothing save our arms and ammunition—though it was plain to every one that there would be leagues of rough travel.

"'Tis our buccaneer custom to fast before we feast, Captain Middleton," Brantley told me as we fought our way through the dense woods, close on the heels of Morgan. "You may trust our Admiral to lead us to the feast. He has a keen scent for rich foods, and knows well how to satisfy the cravings of his men's stomachs."

The men about us laughed at his jest and one began to sing an English ballad. 'Twas the song that Antoinette had sung, swinging in the rigging of the pirate ship. I turned and looked at the man keenly. He was a young Irishman, the man who had volunteered to go as spy to Chagres, but I could not recall him as one who had sailed aboard either the York or the captured galleon.

"'Tis become our war-song, Captain Middleton," he said, the blood dyeing his face as he caught my eyes fixed upon him. "The war-song of the prisoners whom the young court beauty saved from the sea through her skill at swords."

"'Twere as well that ye sang her psalm, young Paddy," an old buccaneer called. "'Sblood! 'twill take both His rod and His staff to bring ye safely to Chagres and through the errand ye were so blithe to undertake. By 'r larkin! 'tis fools rush on when brave men draw back."

"Pish! brother," another cried, "let the lad have his length of rope. 'Tis given us all in our puppy days, else would we old dogs lack the experience that we call bravery."

"Ay!" cried a third, "let the lad be. A merry song puts springs into the heels and courage into the heart. 'Twas care that killed the cat and fretting thins the blood and is damned bad for the health. Let him sing our gallant's ballad, 'twill make us march all the quicker."

So they chaffed each other, sometimes in good part but oftener stopping in a brawl that would have become a fight had not some comrade more good-natured interfered, until we came within half a league of the city. Then Morgan turned about—'twas the first time that

he had more than glanced behind since the beginning of the march—and ordered silence. The men who swarmed up the hill and around him ceased their clamor as though an angel had spoken. He ordered a halt until nightfall. Then would they surprise and take the city had they any hope of supper.

'Twas good dusk when we left the forest, and as silent as the night creatures who flitted around us we swept into the city whose only noise was our footfalls in the empty streets. A city of vacant houses so we found it. The people all fled. For once, the buccaneer chief was at his wits' end. Had they gone to the monasteries and convents on the mountains, to the castle fort, or had they taken refuge in the shipping which that morning lay in the harbor, but now had sailed away? Just as the signal was given for a council a great uproar arose among the pirates who in rushing hither and thither had come to the water front and discovered the hiding place of the fugitives. A little island lay in the harbor, and to it had fled the entire population by means of a narrow bridge. Like savage dogs who sight their prey after a long hunt, the pirates made a rush for the bridge. There came a blaze of light, a volley of musketry, and the pirates in the lead dropped groaning or silent forever. There was

another flash, another volley, the pirates turned and would have fled as madly from the city as they had rushed in had not Morgan and Brantley faced them with drawn swords.

Their Admiral rated them as cowards too contemptible to be named with dogs. He swore at them, flinging at them such a villainous torrent of abuse as I had never heard fall from the tongue of man. In a very transport of rage he slashed with his sword at those who pressed him, then jerking out a pistol swore to shoot down any man who did not lend a hand in bearing their dead and wounded from the city. Like whipped hounds they obeyed him and, in the face of the enemy's fire, returned and lifting their fallen brothers, bore them from the city into the forest with the unwavering precision of well disciplined troops.

Once safe in the forest his abuse ceased and he became once more their undaunted commander. Praising their manner of retreat, he forgot or appeared to forget, their panic and bade them seek what rest they could against the attack on the morrow and quiet the cravings of their stomachs with thoughts of the feast which most assuredly would be theirs. He busied himself in attentions on the wounded and throughout the night superintended the changes of sentinels.

Before dawn the camp was aroused by the shrieks and moanings of the winds in the forest. Tree-tops were twisted off, branches fell about us bruising and wounding the half wakened men, while great trees crashing down threatened them with instant death and forced them to flee into the open country for safety. Cold rain began to fall in torrents, and it seemed as though we who had complained of the torrid heat of the sun the day before would freeze to death.

At daybreak the rain ceased. The pirates heard the Spanish drums beating the diane and became as courageous as ever and as impatient to attack. Quantities of wood and brush were collected and fires started with the intention of quickly drying our arms but the rain began again, falling in such blinding sheets that it appeared as though the skies were melting into water. The complaints of the men became loud and bitter and I looked for mutiny, when Morgan, leaving the shanty into which the wounded had been placed walked among us.

"Captain Brantley," he said, "you Cayman, and you," pointing to the young Irishman, "will skirt around the harbor—with all speed possible—to the little cove where you will find two canoes tied. Man one, hoist the

white flag, go to the island, seek out the Governor and deliver to him the message contained in this paper." He handed Brantley a closely folded paper drawn from the breast of his doublet. "If you are not returned before the noon hour I will attack as is writ." His tone was one of short, sharp command and the men obeyed almost without speaking.

As Brantley and those appointed to go with him disappeared among the trees of the forest, the pirates about me sprang to their feet and, despite the cold and rain, began busy preparations for the attack. Their complaining ceased and there was no more talk of a retreat.

"They are but children, Captain Middleton," Morgan told me as we stood together watching the bands of eager foragers in their search for fuel and anything eatable with which to satisfy the cravings of their stomachs. "You must keep them busy if you would have them content. There are scarce a dozen amongst them who would not rush pell mell into the city in search of food—of which they would find none, for the Spaniards have left their town as though swept with a broom so far as things eatable are concerned—were it not for the cordon of sentries and the order to shoot down all who attempt to go beyond the lines

of the camp. 'Twas the only way left me to conceal our weakness and make the Spaniards believe us the multitude from which they fled."

"You think they fancy us a multitude?" I asked.

"Yea," he answered, "there stands their city deserted and their island barricaded against ten thousand. Every ship in the harbor has put out to sea and the fortress fairly bristles with soldiers. 'Twas on this evidence that I demanded their surrender."

"Then you did demand their surrender?" I questioned, amazed at his bold audacity.

"I threatened to put them to the sword if they did not yield," he declared laughing at the amazement which I knew was written on my face. "I am no shrinking woman, Captain Middleton, and know right well the metal of the Spaniards. If I mistake not the man who governs St. Catherine my terms will be accepted."

That he rated the man justly was proved on the arrival of Brantley charged with the Governor's answer. This answer declared that the Governor of St. Catherine had decided in full conference with his councillors that it was impossible for them to defend the city against such an armada, and humbly begged the buccaneer admiral to accept a certain blood-

less stratagem which would not only save his own head but preserve the reputation of his officers at home and abroad. Morgan was to come at night and assault the fort of St. Jerome, which stood near the bridge that joined the island with the city. At the same time troops were to land near the battery of St. Matthew—on the island—and take prisoner the Governor as he fled for safety to St. Jerome. Thus captured and threatened with the loss of his own life and the destruction of his people, he would surrender the city and the two forts.

Morgan accepted his terms, and that night, after feasting on the provisions sent him by this same brave Spanish official, he led out his buccaneers and went through the mummery as arranged. With much smoke and great consumption of powder, but no cannon balls, our enemies were driven back, the island was surrendered and Spanish pride remained unhurt.

The object of our visit was still to seek. The next morning when Morgan demanded the surrender of the castle and its prisoners, the Governor shook his head. Like Chagres it was a royal prison and under the control of a Governor appointed by His Most Catholic Majesty. Its dungeons were crowded with prisoners both from Old and New Spain—people whose liberty threatened the peace of the country and who

were sent to rot in its dungeons or endure the pain of a thousand deaths in its torture chambers. Its Governor had sworn not to surrender and it was the opinion of the valiant ruler, who stood our prisoner, that it could not be taken.

"It can and shall be," Morgan cried with a torrent of oaths against Spain and her manner of warfare, as he turned and strode from the governor's presence. "Bras de Fer," he thundered, to the captain of the Phœnix, "pick you ten men and bring out the religious folk from the convent, men and women—all. Captain Brantley, you with Captain Middleton and the men under you, build ladders to escalade the fort. See to it that they are both broad and strong."

The tone of his voice left no room for questioning, and the men called on sprang to do his bidding, straining both muscles and brain. He took as his own task the collecting and distributing of arms and ammunition. So perfect was his discipline, and so promptly were his orders obeyed, that nightfall found his entire force, save those who were left to guard the city and its imprisoned inhabitants, outside the walls of the castle and the attack begun.

'Twas past midnight when I saw Master Bernard Schinking rush out the firing lines at the head of a handful of buccaneers; some half

dozen priests were with them bearing scaling ladders.

"To the walls! brothers," the Dutchman shouted. "To the walls and up the ladders that the good fathers shall plant for us! The Dons have hundreds of gunners to take the place of those we pick off and should their bullets fail, they have the church plate and hogsheads of other treasure to melt down and mould."

The pirates answered as one man. With wild yells and hurrahs they followed Schinking's lead, swarming under the walls like a pack of hounds springing at the quarry. They threw their grenades, battered against the iron door, unmindful of the flaming, bursting pots and other missiles hurled down upon them, and the comrades who fell groaning at their sides. Schinking had touched the right cord—solved the mystery of where the treasures of the city had been hidden.

"Bring up the sisters, Cayman," he shouted, giving the order which I believe in my heart Morgan himself would not have voiced. "'Tis with their weak hands we would plant these ladders. Draw not back, man," he shouted to me. "There are women in that prison, women as young and well born as Antoinette, whose limbs and tender bodies know

the tortures of the rack. On, brothers, on!" he cried to those who obeying his orders dragged forward the terror stricken servants of the church and with pistols and knives thrust into their faces forced them to plant the ladders.

A cry of horror and rage burst from those who manned the walls. Missiles ceased to fall and every gun of the battery was silenced. The stratagem had proved successful. The superstitious Spaniards refused to obey their leaders to the destruction of the consecrated servants of God. A very babel arose within the walls. The garrison had turned against their officers and with the death dealing implements intended for the destruction of the attacking party fought among themselves. Scaling the walls unopposed we sprang among them, hurling them from the ramparts, clubbing them with our guns, stabbing them with swords, as unresisting as frightened sheep. Driven into the courtyard of the prison they threw down their arms, and begged for quarter, shouting out their hatred for the Governor and the few officers who in their efforts to save the castle had sought to force them to destroy the nuns and priests.

"'Tis the dungeons as well as the treasure coffers we would empty, Captain Middleton,"

"Missiles ceased to fall. The stratagem had proved successful."

Morgan cried, after the cannon had been manned and the captured soldiers placed under guard. "I would find my guide to Chagres and give liberty to the miserable creatures we shall rout out from those noisome holes. To the prisoners of Spain the buccaneers are always welcome."

We began our inspection of the cells, walking through long damp corridors at the gaoler's heels. Our swords were drawn and our scabbards clanked against the rough stone walls.

"Not there," Morgan cried, as our guide would have unlocked a door on the first passage. "To the black-hole first. We will begin at the bottom and work up."

"There are but two prisoners in the black-hole," the gaoler growled. "And neither of them is an Englishman."

"Whatever they be, so they are not Spaniards," Bras de Fer cried, "we knock off their chains and give them freedom from the black den in which they rot. Adzooks!" he exclaimed, as we turned into another passage and found ourselves at the top of a third flight of steps leading downwards; "'tis to hell itself he leads us."

"'Tis under the moat," Morgan replied. These royal prisons all have such holes, and,

like as not, 'twill be in just such a one at Chagres that we shall find Huguenin and the War-Chief."

We stopped. Cayman raised the torch above his head that we might the better see about us. It was the end of the passage. The rough walls and floor were slippery with moisture and slimy creatures, noisome both to sight and touch, crawled over them. The gaoler thrust the great key into the lock, we heard it grate, then he pressed his shoulder against the door and forced it open slowly.

'Twas a low-roofed room, more damp and stifling than the passage leading to it. We glanced around and at first I saw nothing, then as the flickering light of the torch penetrated the dark corners, driving out the midnight blackness, I saw two figures. Human beings they were, men, standing in the corner farthest from the door. The smaller one was somewhat in advance of his fellow prisoner, the taller was like the overdrawn shadow of the first. They faced us, but I could not tell whether they were white, red, or black so dim was the light that fell into their corner. Only the outlines of their figures and their burning eyes could be distinguished.

There was a deep indrawn breath as the torch

light fell upon them,—an inarticulate exclamation, more animal than man.

"Morgan!" a hoarse voice called. "Morgan!"

"Great God!" the Buccaneer chief cried, springing forward. "Great God! Uldric! Uldric! Lumulgee! Is it you?"

CHARLESTON lay stretched before us. The waters of the harbor touched by rays of the setting sun sparkled as though with the light of countless brilliant gems, but the sight brought me no gladness. The dull pain that had pressed like a weight upon me was quickened into life and seemed a living hand griping my heart strings.

"If she sailed for France the week after you left, Jack, there's been time for several ships bringing tidings of her," Colonel Huguenin said. We stood against the rail looking at all about us as the merchantman sailed into the harbor and those aboard hurried hither and thither, making ready for our landing.

"Aye," I answered; "there has been time."

"'Twas a long journey and bitter to wed one she does not love, my poor little maid," he said, his voice heavy with emotion. "To look forward to a loveless marriage is like gazing into the still grey of a snow-laden heaven. All brightness is shut out and we see the days of

our life drop by with the cheerless monotony of the fall of those cold, chilling flakes, and know that not until the last day of mortality drops away can we step into the sunlight of eternity."

"And she loved him not, you say?" I asked, turning and eyeing him narrowly. The bitterness in my heart was like gall, yet I knew that one more drop would be added with the knowledge that she loved another. If forced by circumstances too strong for her to battle against she had married him, that I had schooled myself to face with fortitude; but that she loved him —God! the pain shot deep, and it was with my own hand that I twisted the skewers. "He is the handsomest man at the French court, Colonel Huguenin, and it is said that all the ladies, even royalty itself, are victims to his wit and beauty."

"She was not; that I'll swear!" Antoinette's father cried, and the assurance that rang in his voice made my heart leap with joy. "There was a time when I feared for her, knowing the lightness with which the Duke was reputed to hold women, but it passed and I knew that it had been but a girlish fancy. She loved him not when she quitted France. 'Twas as we learned at Jamaica; she claimed the protection of King Louis as the promised wife of his favorite to defend herself against the Eng-

lish James' order to Moreton to deliver her to the Spaniard. 'Twas a choice between two evils and she chose the lesser; for a Frenchman, however bad, lacks the ferocious cruelty of a Don."

"Aye," I answered, and in my heart I grudged that I could not gainsay it.

Then we left the deck and taking our places in the long boat were rowed to the landing. There were many friendly faces among the crowd who gazed at us from the wharf and when some one who recognized me cried out my name there sounded a murmur of surprise and men who were farther up the street rushed down to the water's edge. Then I bethought me and leaning forward lifted the hat from Huguenin's head that all might see who it was that came with me. A shout arose from the crowd as though from the throat of one man. Eager hands stretched out to receive and hold the boat and cries of welcome and a babel of questions greeted us as we sprang to the wharf.

"Bernard Schinking? Where is Master Schinking, Colonel Huguenin?" one man, an old Dutchman, called out. "We know that he brought tidings of you, and then sailed away with Morgan's Buccaneers."

"And he sailed again with Morgan's Buccaneers once they had freed me from the Span-

ish dungeon and set us down safe at Jamaica," Huguenin replied.

"Zounds! but I would I were with them," a younger man cried. "'Tis a noble calling, and I'll warrant Morgan is as gallant a gentleman as ever slit throat or scuttled ship."

I felt a light touch on my shoulder and a brown hand was stretched out to me, a hand as smooth and firm as moulded in bronze. I started and raised my eyes, and saw standing before me him to whom I knew that hand belonged.

"Acuera!" I cried, throwing my free arm across his shoulder. The feeling in my heart was as though I greeted a brother.

"Captain Middleton," he answered; and, from his eyes, I read that he understood and returned my love.

"I saw them strike you down as we fought in Augustine, Acuera," I told him, "and I thought not to see you again this side the Happy Hunting Grounds."

"They gave me many wounds, Captain Middleton, and left me for dead; but I crawled to the gate and finding it unguarded, let myself out and into the forest," he answered. "For two moons I hid by day, and at night dragging myself farther away from the city came at last into the camp of a band of Cherokee braves re-

turning to their country to the north of the Choctaw nation from pearl fishing in the great sea. They received the Choctaw brave as a brother, dressing his wounds and bearing him with them on their march into the borders of the hunting grounds of his own people, else Acuera would be with his father, the great warrior of the Coosaws, in the Happy Hunting Grounds of the Indians. The Great War-Chief of the Choctaws?" he asked, turning to Huguenin. "He was sent captive with Colonel Huguenin into the land of the Spaniard; does he return in the same great ship?"

For the space of two minutes there was complete silence, as Acuera gazed into the eyes of the man he questioned. I saw his face become as a still pool and knew that he steeled himself against what he read. Then Huguenin, raising his arm, pointed across the sea to the southward.

"I left him there, Acuera," he said. "Three days out from the dungeon cells from which our friends took him eaten by gangrene, we buried him in the great sea across which he came as a boy into the land of the Choctaw."

"'Tis well," the young brave answered, without so much as the quiver of a lash, and his voice was as emotionless as his face. "He went to meet in the Happy Hunting Ground

the Emperor of the Choctaws and so many of his warriors that the leaves on the great tree in the forest would scarce number them."

"The temple, Acuera," I cried, "and the great village?"

"They are gone, Captain Middleton," he replied, a bitter smile twisting his lips and his eyes gleaming like living coals. "Plundered of their treasures by the Spanish dogs, who swept from the earth by fire all that they could not bear away on their horses. The Choctaw braves roam in the Happy Hunting Grounds with their fathers; their women and children are driven into captivity or blown about as dead leaves before a blast of the north wind."

With curses in my heart and black hatred against the race whose history in the New World was but a succession of such dastardly deeds, I turned and made my way half blindly to the Governor's house, followed by Huguenin and many of those who had greeted us on the wharf. Moreton had been told of our arrival and met us at the door. His face was white and haggard-looking, despite the joy that shone in his eyes, and the hands with which he grasped my shoulders trembled as those of a man with palsy.

"I thought never to see you again, Captain Middleton," he said, his voice hoarse with emo-

tion. "Mistress Antoinette told me of your leaving and for what, and though each Sabbath the whole colony has prayed for your safe return and for the success of your enterprise, there was not one among us who did not ask with a doubting heart. God has blessed both you and us, Colonel Huguenin."

"He has ever been my merciful, loving Father, Governor Moreton, and as such I have earnestly tried to worship and obey Him," Huguenin replied, reverently lifting the hat from his head.

"He has blessed you with a noble daughter, sir," he cried, and I saw the tears spring into his eyes.

"Has your Honor no tidings of her?" Huguenin asked. "In Jamaica we learned of her mission to France and according to that report there has been time for later news of her acts."

"In every ship sailing since their arrival at King Louis' court I have had letters from Mistress Moreton—"

"From Mistress Moreton!" I exclaimed. "Did she go with her?"

"Yea," he answered. "She could not let her go alone, unattended by an older woman, on such a mission."

"True," I cried, and to my own ears my voice was harsh with bitterness. "On such a

mission a girl ever needs a woman friend. Court beauties as well as timid country maids must have the counsels and consolation of a married woman at such a time. Modesty is a virtue that is best assumed by maids even though they have it not."

"Timid country maids? Modesty?" Moreton repeated regarding me in puzzled surprise. "I do not understand your meaning, Captain Middleton, but you above all men know under what obligations my wife stands to Mistress Antoinette Huguenin. She could not have allowed her to go unattended to France even had her mission been one of less grave import. How bravely your daughter played the part thrust on her and from what she rescued my wife as well as herself, Colonel Huguenin, you have doubtless been told, but there are not words enough to express the gratitude in my heart. When King James's ship sailed into our harbor demanding the delivery of Mistress Antoinette, that she might be returned to the governor at Augustine, I made all resistance and delay that was in my power. I sent for my council, and for the burgesses; I writ out the paper resigning my Governor's warrant, and would have given it them, forcing them to relieve me of my power and throw me into prison as a traitor, had not Richelieu claimed her as a loyal sub-

ject of King Louis and so protected her better than aught that I could ever have done. At best I could have but delayed for a few short weeks obedience to King James's command by refusing to basely give up the girl who had, at the risk of more than life, saved my wife from a fate most horrible. Richelieu took her to France. That she has been kindly received at the French court and has gained King Louis's ear as reported by my wife's letters was proved in a paper brought yesterday by the Mary. It was an order rescinding the warrants for her own and your surrender to the agent of the King of Spain."

"Ah!" Huguenin cried, his voice husky and his eyes filling with tears as he grasped the hand that Moreton extended to him. "'Twas a great sacrifice, but I knew that she would leave no stone unturned, my faithful little maid. But her marriage, when will that be celebrated?"

Moreton's eyes widened with surprise, then he turned them on me with something like a smile gleaming in their depths. "That question can best be answered by another man, Colonel Huguenin," he replied. "I had hoped to see it celebrated in Charleston on her return unless Captain Middleton prove so ardent a

lover that he must needs hasten to France to wed her."

"But the Duc de Richelieu?" I cried. "We were told in Jamaica that she went to France to wed him."

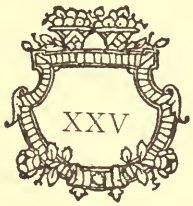
"Pish! Captain Middleton," Moreton exclaimed sternly. "Do you know so little the lady whom you would wed that you rate her word so lightly? You saw her here—in this room—when she received the letter from the King of France; you heard her words to the French duke; and yet you believed an idle rumor, misdoubted her love and her promises to you. Such distrust is beneath you, man, and dishonors the noble lady who has bestowed on you the blessing of her love."

I dropped my eyes in very shame for I knew that he spoke naught but the truth. Again I had a vision of her as she had last appeared to me and her words rang in my ears bringing tears into my eyes: "An thou lovest me Jack, thou wouldst have trusted me."

"Thou didst not tell me, Jack," Huguenin cried, griping my hand, "thou didst not tell me that Antoinette loved thee. An thou hadst, boy, thou shouldst not have suffered, as I now know that thou hast; for I would have reassured thee of the steadfastness of my little

maid's heart. I would not have allowed the black demons of jealousy to eat thy heart out. Thou hast earned both her heart and her hand, and since thou hast her heart thou shalt have her hand. Thou shalt go with me to France on the next ship sailing and if it is thy will, lad, we will take her to England and there thou shalt wed her as I did her mother."

"And cheat your friends in Charleston out of the joys of a great wedding and the sight of a beautiful bride?" Moreton cried, laughing with something like heartiness. "Had I the powers of the king of Spain, Colonel Huguenin, I would forbid your leaving the settlement; but as I am but an humble officer to King James and the servant of the people of Carolina, I must needs tell you that the Richard sails the day after to-morrow, and wish you God-speed!"



THE great salon of Versailles was ablaze with light and filled by such a throng of gorgeously dressed men and women that, when we entered, I was near rubbing my eyes like a child suddenly awakened. The king of France held his midweek *appartement*—the most brilliant of the three levees held during every seven days—and the viscount Uldric Huguenin with his friend, Captain Middleton of the province of Carolina, had been bidden. On our arrival, the morning of this same day, we had been received by a messenger from King Louis who acquainted us with the fact that Mademoiselle Huguenin had gone into the country to visit her grandaunt, and when Huguenin would have followed her he was very courteously informed that it was the King's pleasure that we should attend his midweek levee and remain at Versailles until such time as the king should find it convenient to hear an account of the New World from lips so capable of telling its wonders. Thus con-

strained we controlled our impatience and with smiling lips followed the young gallant appointed to conduct us into the salon of Versailles.

We stopped within the great doors dazzled by a brilliancy unusual to our eyes so long accustomed only to the rays of the sun upon the moss-draped forest and the white-capped sea. While our conductor was conversing with Huguenin, pointing out the various notables who had sprung from oblivion or grown old past recognition, since he was last at court, I used my eyes to such good purpose that I became accustomed to the glare and shifting of colors before me.

Among the laughing, chattering, whispering, gaily dressed crowd who strutted before us with their mincing tip-toe gait there was one figure that caught and held my gaze. He was well nigh the tallest man in the room, well made and with a clear swinging stride despite the high red heels of his square-toed shoes. Though he stood with his side to me his face was so shielded that I could scarce get a glimpse of his features, so busy was he passing his ivory comb through his periwig. I watched him, trying to reason in my mind who it was he so closely resembled. Then he faced me. Clean shaven, his skin was as brown as the inner bark

of a cedar; but I knew him not and turned aside to note the people about whom Huguenin talked.

"Mignard? Is it, indeed, Pierre Mignard?" he was asking, and following the direction of his eyes I saw an old man who leaned heavily upon the arm of a beautiful girl laughing and talking with a group who stood around them. "When last I saw him, it was at the home of Scarron. Poor, witty Scarron! I can see him now, wheeling himself about among his guests in his cripple's chair, his roguish eyes sparkling; laughing and scattering compliments; all the while scratching himself with his ivory wand. It was before Mignard made himself famous painting with his left hand the face of his own child as saints and angels of Heaven. But Scarron! We little thought in those days to see the time when his prison-born wife would hold the fortune of France in her dimpled hand. You say that Mademoiselle Mignard is the most beautiful woman in France?" he asked turning to the young gallant.

"When Mademoiselle Huguenin is not by," he answered with a shrug. "An she should enter the room this minute all eyes would turn her way. Yea, and remain that way even should Louis himself come in."

"She favors the Duc de Richelieu?" I asked

him, privately; for, brought face to face with all the light and beauty of the French court in which she had passed so much of her life, my heart misgave me when I thought of the hardships of the only life that I could offer her. "They will make a handsome couple, if King Louis will but sanction their union."

"It is not the sanction of the King that is lacking," he answered, glancing at Huguenin whose eyes were still busy with those about him; "for it is well known that Louis would consent to almost any match that would hold the beauty at his court—though de Maintenon likes her but indifferently well. But Mademoiselle Huguenin turns as deaf an ear to the love sighs of Richelieu as to all others except it be the Duc de Véndome."

"Duc de Véndome," I echoed, startled; for I knew his name well as a daring soldier, and also that he was grandson to a king.

"Yea," he answered. "He is but just returned from some daring venture, the nature of which 'tis said few men know, and is alike the idol of the king, the court and the people. He is ever at the side of Mademoiselle Antoinette, and so much is he feared, both on account of his great strength and daring, and his influence with the king, that all other men durst not so

much as cast a love glance in the lady's direction. 'Tis said—"

"Men alone grow old, Jack," Huguenin interrupted, and I turned unwillingly enough to look in the direction he indicated. "It has been upwards of twenty years since I was last at court; yet, judging by Madame de Sevigne's looks, 'twas but yesterday. Yonder she is with the golden staff. See how the men listen to her and hold their sides with laughter; and well they may, for there is not such another wit in all France. She once had a keen eye and a perfect memory for faces. I will put them to test," he cried, starting forward to join the group about the famous lady.

A tall figure stepped in front of him, and stopping extended his hand. It was the man I had noted on first entering the grand salon. Huguenin regarded him puzzled, half offended by his interruption. The stranger's gaze shifted in my direction and our eyes met.

"Bras de Fer!" I cried, springing forward.

He caught my outstretched hands and held them as though in a vice.

"Who at the court of King Louis is known as Louis-Joseph duc de Véndome, Captain Middleton," he exclaimed smiling. Then catching the change that came over my face he ex-

claimed, "Pish! man, let not a change of name alter our friendship. Why should the name of Vendome cause you to loose the grip you gave Bras de Fer? We have stood shoulder to shoulder in many a rough fight in the New World, why should we fall apart in the court of France? Colonel Huguenin," he said, turning and extending his hand to the man who only a moment before had allowed it to pass unnoticed, but who now grasped it heartily, "it was when I came to court with my father that I first met you. I was a child less than ten years old. You remember my father?"

"Yes, and yourself," Huguenin replied, "though you were as you say, a small child. I never thought of that little lad as Morgan's vice-admiral, the man to whom I owe more than one heavy debt of gratitude. But I see it all now,—your resemblance to your father and to the captain whom I left standing aboard the Phœnix on the high seas."

"It was my humor," Vendome cried, laughing. "I had tired of court life and France and wished to see the world as it appeared to men of less exalted birth. I had met Morgan here when he visited court, when I was scarce more than a child, and hearing many of his wild adventures determined to follow his example and take to the high seas. I sailed for His-

paniola and from there shipped as mate under Hawkins. It was our third venture that carried us to Augustine, Captain Middleton."

"'Twas a lucky fortune that led your Grace on that trip," Huguenin exclaimed.

"Yet I have had my doubts," Véndome replied, and I saw the fire in his eyes soften and his lips droop pensively. "I have thought that trip my undoing. But I would not have it left out of my life, even though it has brought me bitter fruits; there were fruits sweet as well as bitter, though only the bitterness is for my tasting."

"'Tis to you I owe my life," I told him.

He regarded me fixedly for an instant, and though I gazed into his eyes I could read nothing.

"No," he said finally answering my remark. "You owe it to Mademoiselle Huguenin. She told Hawkins of your hanging in the iron cage, and would give him no peace until he went to your rescue. Her persistence then should have made us know her woman, for when was a man ever so determined to save human life at the sacrifice of filling his own purse. We were blind fools in the days that followed, Captain Middleton; yet she played her part with wondrous skill. Comes she back from the country soon?" he asked of Huguenin and I saw that

there was more eagerness in his eyes than he cared to show in his voice and manner.

Huguenin shook his head. "I do not know," he answered. "When we landed and found her gone, we would have followed after her, but we were forbid to leave until such a time as the king could find leisure to question us concerning life in the New World."

"An you would take the counsels of a friend, Colonel Huguenin," Véndome said, and I saw him glance around noting all those about him, "you will not tarry too long in France. England is a safer country for you."

"England!" I cried; for the demon of jealousy in my heart made me doubt the sincerity of his advice. "King James is Catholic and likes no Protestants."

"'Tis William of Orange that you should consider, not James," he answered. "For even now James's crown is toppling from his head. If I mistake not the signs of the time his head will topple from his body an he quits not the English throne."

"You would—" Huguenin began.

"The King comes!" was his reply, and, with a mighty jingling of trinkets and rustling of brocades, all in the great room rose to their feet and stood with their faces turned towards the door as it swung open and Louis-le-Grand

entered. As by magic the crowd separated, making way. Finding myself in the front I would have stepped back had not Véndome held me in place.

"You are well placed, Captain Middleton," he whispered. "He hath the eyes of an eagle and naught can escape him. He will see you and it were best that you stand out boldly."

This man to whom all faces turned, and before whom heads and knees alike were bent, was not so tall as many of the women about me and his costume was less gorgeous than that of the majority of the men, and yet, withal, there was so much of dignity in his countenance and bearing that I would have known him king among ten thousand. His voice had a mellow ring that was most pleasant as he talked to the gentleman upon whose arm he leaned, or threw out a remark or question to those he noted in passing.

"'Tis d'Estrees," Véndome whispered; "the wily cardinal. Louis is always bemoaning his lack of teeth, while d'Estrees, hath a mouthful, and is only too glad to show them. What does he answer?"

"Ah, Sire," the Cardinal's voice came to us distinctly, spoken with a sigh that one hears in the autumn wind. "Who is there now that has any? We all suffer alike with your majesty."

At the end of the salon King Louis turned and came back again. For the second time I felt the calm blue eyes run over me. He halted for an instant.

"You buccaneers stand shoulder to shoulder, cousin," he said, speaking to Véndome.

"It has been so reported by our enemies, sire," Véndome answered.

"They are ever the best judges of our metal, cousin," he answered, with another flash of his eyes over me and an inclination of his head as he passed on.

As the doors closed behind him the signal was given and dancing began. Véndome left us for an instant then, returning he led the way to a table placed a little to one side. We took our seats and, taking up a pack of cards he began to shuffle and deal them with all the earnestness of a man intent on his game. But I knew his mind was not on the cards, and that he but bided his time until he could be rid of the young gallant who followed us and speak to us privately.

"It is a stupid game, at best," the young Frenchman exclaimed, throwing down his hand when the game had gone hard against him. "But since you gentlemen must needs play I will find you a partner better suited to your

humor." He left his seat and was in the act of turning from us when one who was his double, so much alike were they in appearance, touched him on the arm, whispered in his ear. Then was gone.

"Twin cousins of de Maintenon, and Louis' particular spies," Vendome whispered in explanation.

"His Majesty would speak to the Viscount Huguenin and Captain Middleton," the young Frenchman said turning back and bowing to us. "He bids me conduct you to him on the instant."

With a low bow and without a word or sign Véndome stepped aside and we passed out from the salon, down corridors, all gilding and flashing mirrors and as brilliantly lighted as the great hall we had left. We stopped at length before a guarded door and our guide knocked. The door opened and he motioned us in.

When the door closed behind us we stood alone with him who had admitted us.

"De Palignac!" Huguenin exclaimed, and I saw the color forsake his face.

"You have a good memory, Viscount. It has been many years since last we met," the man replied.

"Many years," Huguenin's voice came like an echo, and though he had grown deadly pale his eyes told me it was not from fear.

"You stole my sister from my arms," De Palignac said, "but, because of her daughter, I would do you only kindness." Then he added: "The King awaits you. Will you go?" motioning towards a door that faced us. Huguenin passed in.

"Captain Middleton," our conductor said, turning toward me as they reached the door, "you will remain here until such a time as his Majesty sends for you. You will not find it tedious waiting," he added, and there was in his eyes a gleam of something that I did not understand as he bowed and passed through the door after Huguenin.

I stood as a man dazed by a heavy blow. I stared first at the closed door through which they had disappeared; then, turning, I strode toward the one by which we had entered. As I put out my hand to try it, I heard a deep sigh and the rustle of silken skirts. With a start I turned back and faced—

In the same white gown, wearing a crimson blossom in her hair she stood before me, just as she had stood in the great room of the governor's house to receive King Louis' letter. But there was no sternness in her eyes; naught

but love was there, and her hands were held out in gladness.

"Antoinette!" I cried, and I held her in my arms.

"There is no measure to my love," I told her after we had grown more calm.

"No," she answered. "Nor for your faithfulness. Even King Louis grants you have won my love, Jack. And you have it, all that I have to give."

"He will not oppose our marriage?" I asked. "My heart has been sore with misgivings."

"It shall be healed with my love," she told me, and her eyes were like the sunbeams that come after an April shower. "To-morrow, when we sail away from France—"

"From France?" I cried.

"Yea, Jack, to-morrow you and my father and I leave France forever. It is for our safety, and all is made ready. Within the week King Louis withdraws his indulgence to Protestants. The edict given at Nantes will be revoked."

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